Universidade de Lisboa
Instituto de Ciências Sociais

Going for God:
Mobility, Place and Temporality among Evangelical Guineans in Lisbon

Ambra Formenti

Doutoramento em Antropologia
Especialidade: Antropologia da Religião e do Simbólico

2014

Universidade de Lisboa
Instituto de Ciências Sociais

Going for God:
Mobility, Place and Temporality among Evangelical Guineans in Lisbon

Ambra Formenti

Tese Orientada pelo Doutor João Vasconcelos
e pelo Doutor Ramon Sarró

Doutoramento em Antropologia
Especialidade: Antropologia da Religião e do Simbólico

Financiada por Fundação da Ciência e Tecnologia, bolsa SFRH/BD/64393/2009

2014

Abstract

In the last decades the intensification of migratory flows has led to a gradual pluralisation of urban religious landscapes in Europe. One of the most relevant aspects of this process is the spreading of Evangelical and Pentecostal churches founded by African migrants, a phenomenon that contributed to the emergence of new configurations of Christianity in Europe. The town of Lisbon (Portugal), a place where different experiences of spirituality and distinct worldviews meet and interact, is an emblematic case of religious encounter between deep-rooted Catholicism and imported forms of Christianity. This dissertation provides an ethnography of Guinean Evangelical Christianity in Lisbon, focusing on the case of the Missão Evangélica Lusófona (MEL), a church settled in the outskirts of Lisbon and attended mostly by migrants from Guinea-Bissau.

Taking the MEL as a case-study of African Churches in the diaspora, I try to describe and analyse the centrality of religion in the lives of Evangelical Guinean migrants in Lisbon. My central argument is that, in this context, religious faith appears as a way to make sense of the experiences of dislocation and re-location of believers. Accordingly, in the following pages I portray MEL as an emblematic example of how Evangelical Christianity sustains migrants in their transnational movements while concurringly enables them to create a sense of place in the localities in which they chose to dwell.

Furthermore, by examining the experiences and life stories of MEL's members, I address a series of issues, such as: the meaning of conversion for individuals and communities; the connection between religious faith and the condition of stranger; the relationship between global/universal and local/particular dimensions of religious identity; the ways in which religious actors appropriate and transform the urban space where they live in; the emergence and transformation of peculiar visions of space and time, including the ways how human groups produce their past, present and future.

Key-words: African Churches in Lisbon; Evangelical Christianity; migration; Guinea-Bissau; conversion; future.

Resumo

Nas últimas décadas, a intensificação dos fluxos migratórios levou a uma pluralização gradual das paisagens religiosas urbanas na Europa. Um dos aspectos mais relevantes deste processo é a multiplicação de igrejas evangélicas e pentecostais fundadas por migrantes africanos, um fenómeno que contribuiu para o surgimento de novas configurações do cristianismo na Europa. A cidade de Lisboa (Portugal), um espaço onde diferentes experiências de espiritualidade e visões do mundo distintas se encontram e interagem, é um caso emblemático de encontro religioso entre um catolicismo enraizado e formas importadas de cristianismo. Esta dissertação apresenta uma etnografia sobre o cristianismo evangélico guineense em Lisboa, centrando-se no caso da Missão Evangélica Lusófona (MEL), uma igreja localizada nos arredores de Lisboa e frequentada principalmente por migrantes oriundos da Guiné-Bissau.

A MEL, fundada em 2002 por um pastor de origem guineense, é una congregação afiliada à denominação pentecostal internacional Igreja de Deus (Church of God). A maioria dos seus membros é de origem Bissau-guineense; os outros crentes são oriundos de países africanos de língua portuguesa, assim como do Brasil. Tomando a MEL como um estudo de caso das igrejas africanas na diáspora, procuro descrever e analisar a centralidade da religião na vida dos imigrantes guineenses evangélicos em Lisboa. O meu argumento principal é que, neste contexto, a fé religiosa surge como uma maneira de dar sentido às experiências de deslocação e recolocação dos crentes. Assim, nas páginas seguintes vou retratar a MEL como um exemplo emblemático da forma como o cristianismo evangélico apoia os migrantes nos seus movimentos transnacionais, ao mesmo tempo que lhes permite criar um sentido de lugar nas localidades onde escolheram morar.

Através da análise das experiências e das histórias de vida dos membros da MEL abordo problemáticas como o sentido da conversão para os indivíduos e para as comunidades; a ligação entre a fé religiosa e a condição de ser estrangeiro; a relação entre as dimensões global/universal e local/particular da identidade religiosa; as maneiras pelas quais os actores religiosos apropriam e transformam o espaço urbano em que vivem; o surgimento e a transformação de determinadas visões do espaço e do tempo, incluindo as formas através das quais os grupos humanos produzem o seu passado, o seu presente e o seu futuro.

A MEL não é a única igreja frequentada por migrantes evangélicos guineenses na Grande Lisboa. Pelo contrário, neste contexto os crentes implementam varias estratégias de integração, que incluem a adesão a igrejas evangélicas portuguesas, a frequentação de congregações frequentadas por migrantes de outras nacionalidades, a pertença a comunidades guineenses em igrejas locais, e a participação em associações evangélicas formadas por compatriotas. Forneço um esboço geral dessas múltiplas estratégias de incorporação e ocasionalmente comparo a MEL com outras organizações religiosas, para assim abordar questões que são comuns à comunidade evangélica guineense em Lisboa na sua totalidade.

O meu trabalho de campo decorreu em Lisboa entre 2010 e 2012. Realizei igualmente uma estadia de um mês em Bissau, no início de 2013, com o objectivo de documentar a trajectória histórica da minoria evangélica na Guiné-Bissau. Já que a maior parte do material etnográfico é o produto de um fluxo de ideias, histórias e pessoas entre Lisboa e Bissau, o horizonte do meu estudo é semelhante ao que Arjun Appadurai (1996) chamou de "esfera pública diaspórica", isto é, um espaço de circulação de ideias e pessoas que escapa à lógica territorial do estado-nação. Por esta razão, o meu objecto de estudo tem referências constantes a vários contextos: o bairro de Vale Forno onde a igreja está situada, a comunidade guineense Evangélica em Lisboa, a minoria evangélica na Guiné-Bissau. Ao reconstruir o passado de indivíduos, famílias e comunidades na sua terra natal, e ao explorar as suas aspirações futuras, tentarei propor uma interpretação do seu presente diaspórico.

Esta dissertação apoia-se, em primeiro lugar, na antropologia do cristianismo, com um enfoque especial nos recentes estudos sobre os movimentos evangélicos e pentecostais na África e na diáspora africana na Europa. Em segundo lugar, integra a literatura histórica, política e antropológica sobre o colonialismo e o pós-colonialismo na Guiné-Bissau. Em terceiro lugar, este trabalho pretende contribuir para os debates de longa data sobre os temas da conversão e da modernidade. Em quarto lugar, pretende conectar-se aos desenvolvimentos recentes na antropologia da migração, bem como aos autores que reflectem sobre a subjectividade migrante. Finalmente, esta dissertação dialoga com a recente antropologia do futuro, a fim de explorar a temporalidade específica vivida pelos evangélicos guineenses, tanto na sua terra natal como na diáspora.

Esta tese encontra-se organizada em sete capítulos. O primeiro capítulo é predominantemente baseado na história oral e descreve a trajectória do movimento evangélico na Guiné-Bissau tendo como pano de fundo a história pós-independência do país. Ilustrando o

contexto de insegurança gerado pelo colapso do Estado pós-colonial, analiso a transformação do movimento de uma minoria marginal à uma comunidade religiosa influente (apesar de numericamente minoritária), cada vez mais presente na arena pública. Por fim, examino o crescimento do cristianismo evangélico no contexto de uma viragem geral para as religiões universais na Guiné-Bissau contemporânea.

No segundo capítulo examino a história do movimento evangélico guineense concentrando-me sobre a questão da conversão. Fundamentado nas histórias de vida dos meus interlocutores, este capítulo examina o material etnográfico recolhido à luz do debate teórico sobre a conversão, bem como da literatura sobre o pluralismo étnico e religioso na região. Com base na análise dessas narrativas, defendo que uma das principais motivações que levaram muitos dos meus interlocutores a abraçar o cristianismo evangélico é o medo de ser vítima de ataques ocultos e o resultante desejo de escapar deles.

O terceiro capítulo aborda a atracção dos crentes guineenses para o cristianismo evangélico, com foco na associação entre as narrativas evangélicas e os discursos locais sobre a modernidade. Em primeiro lugar, desenho um breve resumo da literatura mais ampla sobre modernidade, cristianismo e colonialismo na África. Em segundo lugar, de acordo com os autores que propõem pensar a modernidade como uma língua local, tento ilustrar como esta é entendida pelos evangélicos guineenses. Por último, interpreto a adopção do cristianismo evangélico como uma forma de "ser moderno/a" através da religião.

No quarto capítulo traço a história, a organização e a estrutura social da MEL no contexto da paisagem religiosa portuguesa, com um foco especial na área metropolitana de Lisboa. Para além disso, descrevo as acções sociais realizadas pela MEL no bairro onde está instalada, analisando a relação ambivalente entre a igreja e as instituições locais neste contexto.

O ponto de partida do quinto capítulo é a questão geral da condição de migrante. Usando a literatura sobre este tema, pretendo analisar as formas peculiares como a "condição de estrangeiro" (le Blanc 2010) é vivida pelos migrantes guineenses em Lisboa. Para este fim, descrevo as características sociais e culturais da comunidade guineense em Portugal, bem como as circunstâncias históricas de seu surgimento. Reflicto sobre o que pode ser considerado como a dupla dimensão da condição de migrante, e defendo que a vida dos migrantes guineenses em Lisboa é marcada por uma dialéctica entre aventura e nostalgia. Por

último, quero mostrar como essa dialéctica adquire características específicas no caso de crentes evangélicos guineenses.

O sexto capítulo, dedicado ao tema do espaço, constitui o núcleo da dissertação. Em primeiro lugar, introduzo o assunto com referência à "virada espacial" na antropologia. Em segundo lugar, dialogo com autores que estudaram as formas como o espaço é transformado em "lugar" através da religião, mostrando como a religião ajuda as pessoas a viajar e habitar ao mesmo tempo. Em terceiro lugar, descrevo como a marginalização espacial tem sido produzida na área metropolitana de Lisboa, com um foco especial no bairro do Vale Forno, onde uma configuração social particular surgiu ao longo do tempo, marcada por um dualismo entre antigos moradores e recém-chegados. Em quarto lugar, exploro as maneiras através das quais a MEL apropria e transforma o espaço urbano, analisando a interacção entre os seus membros, os habitantes portugueses do bairro e as instituições locais. Finalmente, mostro como a visão do mundo evangélica permite aos crentes lidar com a sua condição marginal através de um discurso de salvação.

O sétimo capítulo é centrado na questão do tempo. Enquanto os capítulos anteriores exploram o passado e o presente dos meus interlocutores, este examina as formas como os crentes evangélicos guineenses - tanto na terra natal como na diáspora - estão empenhados em imaginar, pensar e produzir o seu futuro. Na minoria evangélica na Guiné-Bissau, a visão particular do tempo resulta da intersecção de determinadas circunstâncias históricas e culturais com ideias sobre o futuro e a esperança com origem na tradição cristã. Por outro lado, analiso as representações do futuro dos migrantes evangélicos guineenses, enfatizando a tensão entre a dimensão privada e a dimensão colectiva nos seus projectos de vida.

Ao longo desta dissertação, destaco as formas através das quais a MEL ajuda os seus membros a manter os vínculos com Bissau e cria, ao mesmo tempo um sentido de "lugar" na localidade onde vivem. Tal como acontece em outras igrejas cristãs na diáspora, graças a um processo constante de auto-transformação e revitalização colectiva, a fé evangélica permite aos seus membros passar de migrantes a missionários numa terra que, aos seus olhos, perdeu o caminho do Evangelho.

Palavras-chave: igrejas africanas em Lisboa; cristianismo evangélico; migração; Guiné-Bissau; conversão; futuro.

For Milo and Lea

Contents

Acknowledgements XV

List of abbreviations XVII

List of illustrations XVIII

Introduction 1

Chapter 1 Going for God: the Evangelical Movement in Guinea-Bissau 37

Sweeping at the nation's gate 37

Lus numia na sukuru (the light illuminates the darkness) 39

Foundation *42*

Institutionalization *46*

Expansion *48*

The crisis of the post-colonial state in Guinea-Bissau 51

The Evangelical minority from separation to participation 59

Chapter 2 "Am I not free?" Conversion, between Ruptures and Continuities 71

The soldier of God 71

The conversion debate 79

Landlords, strangers, and creoles 87

Narratives of conversion 94

Chapter 3 Modernity, or the art of making connections 115

The Heart of Man 116

Modernity and its critics 123

Christianity, colonialism, and modernity in Africa 127

Modernity as *desenvolvimento* 132

Modernity as connectivity 139

Chapter 4 The Missão Evangélica Lusófona in the Portuguese Religious-scape 147

Just like Joshua 147

Religious Plurality in Portugal 149

Walking in a Heathen Town....156
The Missão Evangélica Lusófona: Social Setting and Organization....161
The Missão Evangélica Lusófona: Ritual Dimension....170
The Associação Comunidade Lusófona....177

Chapter 5 Between Adventure and Nostalgia: the Migrant Condition and its Predicaments 183

Chapter 6 City of Palms: Religion, Space, and Place in the outskirt of Lisbon 217
Eu tomo posse deste lote (I take possession of this plot)....218
The "spatial turn" in anthropology and beyond....223
Religion, space, and place....229
Spatial marginalization in the Lisbon region 233
Vale do Forno....240
The mission at the margins 249

Chapter 7 Second Coming, Successful life and the Sweetness of Guinea: Evangelical Thoughts about the Future* 261
New Year's Eve....262
For an anthropology of the future....266
Making the future in Africa....271
Dreaming of a better life in Bissau....281
Multiple temporalities between Bissau and the Kingdom of God....287
Waiting for the End of Time 289
Vison di nha vida (vision of my life) 290
Vison di nha terra (vision of my country)....293
From orphans of modernity to children of God....297
Migrant desires....306

Conclusion 311

Glossary 315

References....317

Appendix – Letter of recommendation....341

Acknowledgements

This work would not have been possible without the contribution of a multitude of people who, in one way or another, have accompanied me on this challenging but exciting journey. I would like to express my gratitude to some of them, apologizing to all those I have not mentioned due to space limitations.

My first thanks go to all my interlocutors in Lisbon and in Bissau, for their generosity in receiving me in their houses and places of cult and for their patience in answering to my endless questions. Among all the people who helped me throughout my fieldwork, I would like to express my special gratitude to Pastor Eliseu and Pastor Saline, who opened the doors of their church to me and gave me so many important information; to Zé Augusto, who introduced me to the Evangelical Guinean community in Lisbon; to Pastor Quintino, who shared with me his extraordinary life story; and of course to all the members of the Missão Evangélica Lusófona. In Bissau, Pastor Felix was a crucial source of information and contacts, as well as of friendship and hospitality, together with his wife Brenda and all his family. I also would like to thank all the leaders of the Igreja Evangélica da Guiné-Bissau, who shared with me their memories and documents about the history of their community.

My infinite gratitude goes to my supervisors, Ramon Sarró and João Vasconcelos, for their crucial insights, visions, comments and encouragements. It was thanks to their fundamental and complementary orientation that I was able to complete this research.

I was fortunate to attend my PhD course at the Institute of Social Sciences, where I found a stimulating environment that allowed me to grow intellectually and personally. Here, my work has benefited enormously from the comments of many excellent scholars. Among them, I would like to mention Cristiana Bastos, João Pina-Cabral, José Manuel Sobral, Ruy Blanes and Simone Frangella. I was also fortunate to have so brilliant and nice PhD colleagues, who supported and encouraged me in difficult times and gave me their precious suggestions in seminars and conversations. My special thanks go to Ana Luísa Micaelo, Giulia Cavallo, Max Rubens, Murilo Guimarães, Natalia Zawiejska, Raquel Carvalheira and Irene Rodrigues, whose contribution was essential to my work. I would also like to mention Ana Rita Amaral, Carolina Höfs, Elsa Frazão Mateus, Gleiciani Fernandes, Inês Galvão, Joana Areosa Feio and Maricò Lo Bosco, who inspired me and helped me during this long

process. Finally, I am thankful to the administrative staff, an especially to the Post-graduate studies office and the library staff, for having provided me with a warm and welcoming "home" in these years of study.

I must also acknowledge the importance of the suggestions and insightful commentaries I received from scholars from other institutions. Anna Fedele, Joana Vasconcelos, José Mapril, Marina Temudo, Miguel de Barros, Raul Fernandes and Valerio Simoni have been special interlocutors in my work.

Joanna White and Rob Richards made a wonderful job of copy-editing of this text, greatly improving it in terms of language, even with short deadlines.

I would like to thank the Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (FCT) for having founded this research with a grant, and for having partially supported my travel to Bissau.

Last but not least, my greatest gratitude goes to my family and close friends. In particular, I am thankful to my parents, Carlo and Marisa, my sister Gaia and my parents in law, Anita and Flaminio, who encouraged me and gave me a fundamental help by taking care of my children so many times during these years. Special thanks go to my friend Uil Costa, whose brilliant comments and reflections were of crucial importance to understand the context I was studying. Finally, very special thanks go to Francesco Vacchiano, brilliant scholar and beloved partner, who was a valid fieldwork assistant and a tireless reader of my text; and to my dear children, Milo and Lea, who also accompanied me in my fieldwork and have put up with my constant mood swings. This work is dedicated to them.

List of abbreviations

ACL – Associação Comunidade Lusófona (Lusohone Community Association)

ACEGP - Associação dos Crentes Evangélicos Guineenses em Portugal (Guinean Evangelical Believers in Portugal Association),

COG – Church of God

IDP – Igreja de Deus em Portugal (Church of God in Portugal)

IEGB – Igreja Evangélica da Guiné-Bissau (Evangelical Church of Guinea-Bissau)

IURD – Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus (Universal Church of the Kingdom of God)

MAFI – Ministério de Amor pela Fé Internacional (Ministery of Love for International Faith)

MEL – Missão Evangélica Lusófona (Lusophone Evangelical Mission)

PAIGC – Partido Africano para a Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde (African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde)

RCCG - Redeemed Christian Church of God

WEC – Worldwide Evangelization Crusade (later Worldwide Evangelization for Christ)

List of illustrations

1. WEC's pamphlet. Going for God: History of Bessie Brierley 39
2. The Hert of Man: charts 115
3. Door with Saint, Vale do Forno 222
4. Entrance of the MEL's place of cult, ... 222
5. Painting a mural at Casa Emmanuel 281

Introduction

In the last decades, Evangelical, Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal churches attended by African and Latin American migrants spread throughout the European urban spaces. This phenomenon produced new configurations of Christianity in Europe, contributing to a gradual pluralisation of urban religious landscapes. The town of Lisbon is an emblematic case of religious encounter between Catholicism and these new forms of Christianity, a space where different experiences of spirituality and distinct worldviews meet and interact. This dissertation will provide an ethnography of Guinean Evangelical Christianity in Lisbon, focusing on the case of the Missão Evangélica Lusófona[1] (MEL), a church settled in the outskirts of Lisbon, and mostly attended by migrants from Guinea-Bissau.

By examining the experiences and life stories of MEL's members, I try to answer a series of questions: what is the relation between global/universal and local/particular dimensions of religious identity in this context? Why have these believers chosen the Evangelical faith, embracing a religion that is a minority both in Guinea-Bissau, where Islam and local religions prevail, and in Portugal, a traditionally Catholic country? What is the meaning of conversion for individuals and communities in this specific context? What is the relationship between Evangelical faith and the condition of stranger? In which ways church and believers appropriate and transform the urban space in which they live? What are their visions of time and space, and how they produce their past, present and future? This dissertation aims to answer these and other questions, by making a portrait of a diasporic religious community.

Four decades ago, Clifford Geertz formulated his famous definition of religion, describing it as a "system of symbols" that helps humans to make sense of the world in which they live (Geertz 1973:90). In his view, a central aspect of religion would be its aptitude to give order to human experience, as specific worldviews and ethos would reinforce one another in religious practice. "Religion", he said, "tunes human actions to an envisaged cosmic order and projects images of cosmic order onto the plane of human experience" (ibid.). Many years later, Geertz (2005) resolved to update his definition in the light of the

[1] Lusophone Evangelical Mission.

changes affecting the global religious scene at the turn of the millennium. Pace the supporters of the so-called "secularization thesis", he observed, instead of loosing its strength and shrinking into the private domain, religion appears today as an increasingly active, expansive, and influent player on the public sphere. At the same time, a crucial shift seems to be taking place in the way in which religious convictions interplay with social actions in everyday life. According to the author, two hallmarks of the contemporary religious scene may be teased out: firstly, the "progressive disentanglement" of the major religions from the places, peoples, and social formations in which they took shape (for instance, Christianity from Europe and the United States, and Islam from the Middle East and North Africa). Secondly, the emergence of "religious persuasion" as a negotiable and mobile instrument of public identity (Geertz 2005:11). These changes would largely be the outcome of contemporary global migration, which produced a proliferation of religiously-marked diaspora communities on an unprecedented scale. As a result,

> [t]he transformation of more or less routinely transmitted, compliantly received conceptions of the good, the true, and the actual into explicitly asserted, vigorously promoted, and militantly defended ideologies – the move from 'religiousness' to 'religious mindedness' of various sorts and degrees of intensity – […] is now a quite general phenomenon in a world where more and more people and the selves they have inherited are, so to speak, out of context: thrown in among others in ambiguous, irregular, poly-faith settlements (Geertz 2005:12).

And yet, always according to Geertz, even in the face of changing circumstances, religion would not cease to be what it has always been: a system of meanings to orientate human action and to sustain the sense that "things make sense" (ibid: 13).

Today, in the wake of much criticism, the aspiration to formulate overarching definitions of religion seems to have been mostly abandoned by anthropologists. For many scholars, mainly inspired by Talal Asad (1983; 1993), the effort to seek a universal definition can be an obstacle to cross-cultural analysis of the specific contexts in which religion is invoked. In this sense, Geertz's article may be read as a response to Asad's critics, as an attempt to historicize religion and reduce his ambitions for an all-inclusive definition. If Geertz's claim that religion can essentially be understood as a meaning-making device may be criticized for being too pretentious and analytically useless, his reflections seem nonetheless particularly insightful for my own research. In the case of Evangelical Guinean

migrants in Lisbon, religious faith appears as a crucial – although not exclusive - and powerful means to make sense of their experiences of displacement and replacement, as well as of their own condition of being "out of context" in a prevalently Catholic – although increasingly pluralized – environment. And here we get to my central argument: the Missão Evangélica Lusófona is an emblematic example of how Evangelical Christianity sustains migrants in their movements across the globe, while, at the same time, enables them to create a sense of place in the localities in which they chose to dwell. By embracing Evangelical faith, my interlocutors underwent a process of constant self-transformation, which has a double effect: on the one hand, it disconnects them from their original social contexts, by cutting symbolic bonds and social obligations and reconnecting them to the universal Christian community. On the other hand, it reshapes their identity, by providing a sense for their condition of migrants in a foreign land and turning a story of marginality into a narrative of salvation. In other words, thanks to its self-transforming power, Evangelical religion provides orientations and maps of the world that enable believers to deal with a life in motion, and to inhabit and remake specific localities.

Besides being a case-study on African Christianity in Europe, this dissertation is also about the encounter between a non-believer anthropologist and a community of Evangelical believers. It is about the relationship between an Italian student and a group of Guinean workers, in a land where they were all stranger, and in a context which has suffered a dramatic economic crisis in the last few years. Reflexive anthropology has shown how ethnography is the product of a dialogue between the ethnographer and his interlocutors, as well as the result of the specific conditions in which the ethnographic encounter comes about. Accordingly, the following pages will describe the particular historical and personal circumstances in which my research took place.

Before starting to depict the specific conditions of the ethnographic encounter that gave way to my research, I would like to make a terminological clarification. Although my main case study is a congregation affiliated to an international Pentecostal denomination – namely, the Church of God – over the course of my dissertation I will use the wider term "Evangelical" to describe the faith of my interlocutors. In a broader sense, this term classifies all Protestant denominations, including those that have their origins in the Reformation, as

well as all the subsequent revivals of Protestant genesis[2]. In a narrower sense, the term "Evangelical" takes its meaning from a long history of controversies within Christianity. Its polemical significance has its roots in Martin Luther's will to distinguish his interpretation of Christianity from the more ritual and traditional form represented by Catholicism. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a further controversy emerged between orthodox Protestants and a new group of reformers, the Pietists. Pietists stressed the need for an experiential faith as opposed to one based in doctrine, as well as the centrality of the Bible as a channel through which God may communicate personally with the believer (Stromberg 1993). A number of later revivals stemmed from the Pietist root, including the Methodists (in the eighteenth and nineteenth century) and the Pentecostals (at the turn of the twentieth century). The former group stressed the importance of an experience of "sanctification" subsequent to conversion, by which a true Christian can live a life free from sin. By contrast, the latter insists that the believer must personally undergo a "born again" experience in which he or she receives the Holy Spirit in his or her body, and whose outward sign is the acquisition of a set of spiritual gifts (the charismas), which include healing, prophesising and speaking in tongues.

In the case of Guinea-Bissau, the Protestant minority has been and continues to be extremely heterogeneous. As chapter 1 illustrates, the only Protestant organization that worked in Guinea-Bissau from the 1940s to the 1980s was the World Evangelization Crusade (WEC), an interdenominational mission agency with members of multiple backgrounds, including Lutherans, Baptists, Methodists and Anglicans. Later on, the economic and political processes of liberalization that affected the country since the late 1980s fuelled the pluralization of the religious scene, paveing the way for the arrival of new denominations, prevalently of Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal inspiration. Despite the increasing influence of Pentecostal discourses, practices and styles on the current Evangelical scene, plurality and ecumenism remained a hallmark of the Guinean Evangelical movement, both in the homeland and in the diaspora. As a result, believers tend to identify themselves as "Evangelical", regardless of their specific denominational affiliation. Therefore, I prefer to use the term

[2] This broader use of the term is reflected in the expression "Evangelical Alliance", a kind of ecumenical organization that unites, in many countries including Portugal, all Protestant denominations on a national level, both within reformed and revivalist streams.

"Evangelical" to account for this heterogeneity and interdenominational mood, also to conform to the self-representations of my interlocutors.

On the conditions of research

I arrived in Lisbon in the fall of 2009. In 2010 Portugal begun to suffer the effects of the global financial meltdown, swhich had been triggered by the 2007 subprime crisis in the USA. Portuguese financial crisis emerged in the context of the Eurozone public debt crisis, which affected mainly Southern European countries and Ireland since 2009[3]. In 2011, the Portuguese Government signed the "Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies", also known as "Troika Plan", an agreement with the International Monetary Fund, the European Commission and the European Central Bank, wherein the Portuguese state committed itself to balance the public accounts and increase competitiveness in Portugal, in exchange for a cash loan of seventy-eight billion Euros. The agreement was supposedly aimed at stabilizing the Portuguese public debt and restore market confidence. However, the conditions imposed by the Troika (the task-force formed by the three international institutions) envisaged a series of neoliberal measures of economic adjustment, including privatization of national enterprises, public spending cuts in education, health and social security, measures to facilitate layoffs and general increase of taxes. In 2012, the policy of austerity implemented by the Government became even stricter, comprising cuts to salaries and pensions. The outcome of these measures was the rise of unemployment and job insecurity, the fall in consumption and a general impoverishment of the population. In 2012, the Portuguese economy suffered the deepest recession since 1975, reaching - 3.2% of GDP[4], and the situation has not improved over the following years.

Astonished, migrants from Guinea-Bissau were confronted with the reproduction, in their host country, of the same neoliberal policies that had caused bankruptcy in their

[3] The eurozone crisis started in early 2009, when a group of ten European banks solicited a bailout from their respective governments. As states these opted to save the troubled banks, taking on their debts and socialising their losses, they were forced in turn to ask the assistance of international organizations (namely the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund) in order to repay or refinance their government debt. From late 2009 on, fears of a sovereign default spread among investors, while rating agencies downgraded the public debt of some selected states, especially Greece, Portugal, Spain and Italy. The crisis had adverse economic effects on such countries, with decline in economic growth, rise of unemployment, cuts in public spending and wages and a general impoverishment of the population due to austerity programs.
[4] Source: Instituto Nacional de Estatística (INE) – National Institute of Statistics of Portugal.

homeland, as well as in other African countries that adopted the Plans of Structural Adjustment required by World Bank and International Monetary Found in the 1980s. In the wake of the Portuguese crisis, many of them moved to other European countries, such as Britain, France, Belgium and Germany. Others envisaged to return home, a project nullified by the 2012 coup d'état of 2012, which left Guinea-Bissau in a situation of severe political instability. Others decided to remain in Portugal, waiting to see how the situation evolved.

The analysis of the structural causes of these events is beyond the scope of this dissertation, and for a thorough analysis I point at the work of David Harvey (2005), Arjun Appadurai (2013) and Carlo Formenti (2013). Here, I would simply highlight the close relationship between the global economic crisis that began in 2007 and the process of financialization of the economy, which in turn was fostered by the deregulation of financial markets launched in the last century by Ronald Reagan in the USA and Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom. The outcomes of this process of financial liberalization were the increasing globalization of financial markets, the proliferation of high-risk financial transactions, and the rising monopolization of banking institutions. These factors have been identified by many analysists as root causes of the current global crisis (Harvey 2005; Appadurai 2013; Formenti 2013).

Up to here I briefly described the historical circumstances in which the ethnographic encounter that gave form and substance to this dissertation took place. If my research was deeply affected by this social and historical framework, further aspects of the fieldwork interaction should be considered. In particular, I would like to highlight two points with regard to my positionality vis-à-vis my subject of inquiry,. The first has to do with my own experience of migration, the second with my personal story with regard to religion. Undoubtedly, being an migrant myself has influenced my selection of research themes. Additionally, it has led to comparative reflections about the experience of dislocation, helping to establish an empathetic relationship with my interlocutors. Especially, my condition of stranger facilitated and made more plausible my integration in a church which was frequented almost exclusively by migrants. Finally, my initial lack of knowledge of the history of Portugal and its former colonies has certainly oriented the interaction with my interlocutors, as well as the interpretation of the ethnographic material: on the one hand it made it easier for

me to ask seemingly obvious questions; on the other it obscured some lines of analysis while suggesting others.

The second point is worthy of a slightly deeper analysis. Unlike many of my interlocutors, I did not grow up in a religious family. Although I was born and raised in Italy, widely considered as the centre of the Catholic world, none of my kin has ever been a practicing Catholic. The tradition of atheism in my family goes back to my paternal grandfather, a communist barber who spent most of his life in Milan. My grandmother, a Swiss who migrated to Milan as a teenager, used to define herself as a Protestant, but I have almost never heard her talking about religion. My father, like me and my sister, was not baptized and did not receive any religious education. My mother's family was non-practicing Catholic. It is from my maternal grandparents that I received a few notions about Catholic religion, although my grandparents went to church only on Easter and Christmas.

During my childhood I nourished a faith that I could describe as "magical" or "creative": I mixed what my grandparents taught me about the *Pater Noster*, the Hail Mary and the Heaven with my childhood imagination. For me, God was a sort of imaginary friend, with whom I was speaking and sometimes arguing. At primary school, I choose to attend the "hour of religion" [5] although it was not mandatory. I was envying my friends who frequented catechism, and I was feeling different because my parents had not given me a religious education. In those times, some of my friends gave me a pocket sized New Testament, which I still preserve. I remember that the passages I most liked were the parables, mysterious stories hiding a meaning that maybe one day I would have been able to fully understand. As the years went by, this inner and creative faith disappeared. At secondary school I stopped attending the hour of religion, and diversity from my mates became a matter of pride. In the eyes of the anarchist teen-ager I felt I was, my earlier faith looked as a sort of magical and childish thinking.

[5] The teaching of Catholic doctrine in Italian public school is a sign of how Catholicism is actually the state religion in Italy. The 'hour of religion' was instituted in the Concordat of 1929 between the fascist government in power at the time and the Church, and was confirmed in 1984 with the following formula: "The Italian Republic, recognizing the value of religious culture and taking into account that the principles of Catholicism are part of the historical heritage of the Italian people, will continue to ensure, within the framework of the aims of the school, the teaching of Catholic religion in public schools of all levels and non-university degree" (Article 9.2).

While I was attending university, I did not delve into any spiritual questions, but was fascinated by the anthropology of religion. I ended up centring my graduation thesis on the theology of enculturation in the Catholic Church. Later, I had the opportunity to carry out a brief research on African Pentecostal Churches in Turin, where the bulk of the Pentecostal community was formed by migrants hailing from Nigeria (Formenti 2007).

Given that my interest in African Evangelical churches did not have any confessional origins, when I began my research I was expecting that my presence in the field would become the subject of daily negotiations, and I readied myself for it. But his awareness still did not prevent all the ambiguities and misunderstandings that occurred during fieldwork. At the beginning of my PhD, I became pregnant with Lea, my second child. At that time I was doing an exploratory fieldwork among Evangelical churches frequented by migrants coming from Guinea-Bissau. Eventually, I decided to focus my fieldwork on a single case-study: the Missão Evangélica Lusófona of Vale do Forno. The choice was made to take into consideration the social and cultural structure of the congregation: the presence of a majority of Guinean migrants and a minority of migrants from other Portuguese-speaking countries seemed a good configuration for the study of the dialectic between global and local in the construction of religious identity among migrant groups. When I resumed my fieldwork in the spring of 2010, I always carried my new-born with me. I began to attend the church during Sunday services: as I lived with my family in the centre of Lisbon, I would put my baby in the car and drive towards the north-western outskirts of the city. To the eyes of many congregants, I was probably not so different from other mothers who brought their children with them to the Sunday cult, except for the colour of my skin, given that the overwhelming majority of the congregation was black. That is how people started to call me *mãe da Leia* (Lea's mother), in line with Guinean customs, or *irmã* (sister) and *abençoada* (blessed), as common among the Evangelicals. Most likely, the presence of my daughter facilitated my first encounter with the congregation. By moving from lap to lap during worship and disturbing the sermons with her cries – just like all the other babies– my newborn helped me to weave relationships in my fieldwork. In short, she played the sort of role of mediation that tends to be crucial in every relationship. What is certain is that both the direction of the church and its members welcomed me warmly and apparently without problems. Nevertheless, the relative ease with which I became a quasi-member of MEL did not avert the

ambiguities and misunderstandings that have characterized my whole fieldwork. And yet, as the following episode will show, ambiguities and misunderstandings turned to be highly productive in my research.

Understanding and misunderstanding: epistemological notes on how we study religion

In March 2010, on the occasion of the International Women's Day, the direction of the Missão Evangélica Lusófona organized a four days' seminar dedicated to the theme of the family. When I arrived at church, Pastor Eliseu[6] (the chief minister of MEL) and the group of men had just already gone to a sister congregation. The group of women had remained in the MEL's place of worship along with Pastor Julie, a Congolese colleague of Eliseu. Julie did not master so well the Portuguese language and frequently asked a girl to help her to translate from French. My knowledge of Portuguese was still shaky at the time, as was my knowledge of Evangelical doctrine and language. In the hall there were a dozen women of various ages. I sat down with my new-born near the entrance, but I was immediately invited to sit in the front rows. The service had not yet begun, there was an informal and relaxed atmosphere, and the women were peacefully chattering. Then the pastor asked to form a circle of prayer and taught us a hymn in French. I participated in the singing, but I did not pray. Later on we went back to our seats and Julie began her sermon, focusing on the issue of evangelization between women. At one point, she unexpectedly addressed to me, asking weather I had "already received the second work of grace"[7]. She knew that I was not a member of the congregation, but she did not know that I was participating in MEL's activities as an anthropologist, my interest in the church being other than spiritual. As I said no, the pastor asked me to come closer, while another woman took Lea in her arms. I walked to the pulpit and the Pastor laid her hands on me, exhorting me to say that I accepted Jesus Christ as my saviour. I did everything she said, to avoid interrupting the ritual. Then she took the oil and anointed my

[6] As a general rule, in this dissertation I opted for maintaining the real names of the key religious ministers (with their consent), while changing the names of lay believers and leaders who have a secondary role in my narrative.

[7] In Pentecostal doctrine and language, the "second work of grace" is a synonym for the "baptism of the Holy Spirit", the sign of sanctification by divine grace. The doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Spirit finds its theological basis in the New Testament: on the day of Pentecost, the Spirit's gifts or charismas - ability to speak in other languages, prophecy, healing, miracles, etc. - are offered not only to the apostles, but to the whole crowd (Acts 2). Pentecostals believe that every Christian can nowadays receive the "second work of grace", whose external signs are the Holy Spirit's gifts.

forehead, and finally hugged me. At that point all the women burst into a thunderous applause, and each of them hugged me too. Everything happened very quickly, and I almost did not realize that I was going through a conversion. I was a little confused, but I thought I would be able to clarify this misunderstanding later on with Pastor Eliseu, with whom I had more confidence.

The seminar ended on March 8, with an open prayer meeting in a large hall provided by the local Municipality. In the seats there were about two hundred people, and on the stage several ministers from various congregations alternated with MEL's musical group and other choirs. At one point, several people of the church came to me, insisting that I go on stage. Then Julie got on the platform and said that she wanted to present a special person. She read a Psalm and begun to tell a story. The tale was about a woman who came from Italy and had approached MEL in order to know the Guinean culture. Subsequently - she continued - thanks to the intervention of the Holy Spirit, this woman had known Jesus Christ and had converted. At the end of the story, Julie said that I was this woman. At this point I was compelled to go on stage, receiving the applause from the audience. Someone brought two bouquets of flowers, which were offered to me and my daughter on behalf of the whole congregation. Finally Julie hugged me, kissed both Lea and me, and gave us her blessing. During the time I was on the platform I kept my mouth shut: I literally felt paralyzed. If I had validated Julie's version, from that moment on I should have played the part of a neophyte, a choice that did not seem ethically sustainable. If I had openly denied it, I would have ruined the atmosphere of joy and welcome towards me and I would have possibly compromised the relationship with Eliseu and the whole congregation. I thought that it was not the right moment to elucidate my real intentions and I ended up sticking to my silent and embarrassed smiling.

This incident troubled me deeply. On the one hand I felt that my behaviour had been ingenuous, and that my fieldwork in MEL had been compromised. On the other hand, I believed that I had acted in the most prudent way, as another conduct would have been disrespectful towards my interlocutors. To overcome this impasse – and after exchanging views with some collegues[8] - I resolved to clarify the misunderstanding, not only with the people most directly involved but also with the entire congregation, presenting my work in the most transparent way. At the end of a weekly worship, I remained in church to chat with

[8] I am especially beholden to Ruy Blanes for having advised me in this troublesome situation.

Eliseu. The pastor urged me to start the training for baptism, consisting in a cycle of Bible study meetings for the new converts. I explained to him that my presumed conversion had been a misunderstanding, and that I did not want to mislead anyone. I then asked for permission to intervene during Sunday service, in order to publicly clarify the reason of my presence in church. At first, the pastor seemed surprised, but then he gave me an answer that struck me and comforted me at the same time. He said that there was no need of any public clarification, because all the believers knew the reasons that brought me to MEL. Actually - he emphazised - I was the only person who did not know the real reason of my presence there: the true author of our encounter was God, who wanted to change my life! He explained that conversion does not happen suddenly. Rather, it is a long process that should not be imposed from outside. In fact many people, though baptized, are never really converted. So, he asked me to "keep my heart open" and remember the words that I heard in church wherever I was, whatever my future would be. As for the rest, they would continue to pray for my salvation and let the Holy Spirit work. While listening to Eliseu's words I was relieved, even though I was not sure that he had fully understood my point of view. I told him that I did not want to be baptized, but I accepted to participate in the baptism lessons, as they would provide an excellent opportunity to strengthen my knowledge of the Evangelical doctrine.

In the following days, I spoke with several believers, telling them that I was not really converted, always receiving similar responses. Eventually, I never gave any public presentation of my research. It is perhaps for this reason that a certain ambiguity remained in my interaction with the believers, especially with those who did not know me closely. A few months later I assisted to the baptism of the new converts. Everyone noticed that I did not receive baptism, but nobody asked me the reason. Their discretion was in line with the private and intimate nature of Evangelical conversion, an event that is considered partly a result of a voluntary choice, partly a gift from the Holy Spirit. Whatever the reason, I am grateful to MEL believers for having respected my decision and accepted my atypical presence in church, as well as for having patiently answered my annoying questions.

I decided to relate this episode since it elicits many reflections. First, it may be connected to the compelling dimension of ritual. As pointed out by Edward Schieffelin, by establishing an order of actions and relationships between the participants, rituals restrict and prescribe the forms of acting and speaking in which actors can engage. To the extent that

worshippers have no alternative way to act, the ritual situation itself is coercive (Schieffelin 1985: 709, cit. by Stromberg 1993). In this view, my response to the call of Pastor Julia was determined by the ritual situation in which we were all engaged. Like any other participant in a ritual, I was caught in a compelling setting.

Second, these events evoke the epistemological and ethical dimension of the ethnographic encounter, as well as the predicaments that ethnographers of religion have to face. Ultimately, this incident prompted a critical reflection on how we study religion. In the first place, the dialogue with Pastor Eliseu brought to my mind the reflections of Franco La Cecla on the inexorableness and potentiality of misunderstanding (La Cecla 1997). La Cecla states that a certain degree of misunderstanding between human beings is unavoidable, because of the imperfect nature of language. Indeed, words never communicate the exact sense intended by the speaker. If misunderstanding is inevitable in interactions between people sharing the same cultural background, it is even more inescapable when languages and cultures are different. Nonetheless, history and daily experience have always shown cases in which people with different backgrounds have been able to live together. According to La Cecla, these interactions show that the inevitable discrepancy between cultures and languages does not prevent the encounter between human beings. On the contrary,

> [Misunderstanding often becomes] the space where cultures can explain and compare each other, and discover to be different. Misunderstanding is the boundary that takes shape. It becomes a neutral zone [...] where reciprocal identities can be attested, while remaining separated just by a misunderstanding. Misunderstanding may, in this sense, defend the innner identity of a person or a culture. [...] But misunderstanding also offers a space of explanation. [...] Misunderstanding is then a chance of translation, a zone in which the incommensurability between people or between cultures can come to terms (La Cecla 1997:9) [9].

As the recent debate in anthropology on the concept of culture has shown, "cultures" are not tangible objects or islands of meanings, limited in time and space (see, among others, (Appadurai 1996; Hannerz 1996). Accordingly, we can speak of encounters between cultures only in metaphorical terms: contacts and clashes are always between people, who can be carriers of many cultural and counter-cultural affiliations and traditions, sometimes in

[9] All quotations of texts in foreign languages were translated by the author.

contradiction with each other. While only in a figurative sense we can say that "cultures can explain and compare each others", La Cecla's words are particularly appropriate to describe the ethnographic encounter, which can be depicted as a "contact zone" (Pratt 2003) where subjects with different worldviews meet and try to communicate. In this sense, in La Cecla's view, misunderstanding constitutes both a limitation and a precondition for ethnographic understanding. Likewise, Christian Lund describes as "fruitful misunderstanding" those situations in fieldwork wherein both parties in the ethnographic encounter are engaged in instrumentalizing and, to a certain extent, deliberately taking advantage from the other. According to Lund, "sometimes, misunderstandings can be mutually fruitful, and deception an integral part of dialogue" (Lund 2010).

The events surrounding my "conversion" may be interpreted in the light of this dialectic of understanding and misunderstanding. On the one hand, misinterpretation arose from untranslatability between my humanistic worldview and the religious cosmovision of my interlocutors. On the other hand, it allowed all players in the game to measure the distance between their own identities. MEL's members learned to detect my presence as something different from that of the usual believers, and, at the same time, I found a way to define a position from which I could daily defend my identity of non-believer.

The validity of understanding as a heuristic process has been the object of many debates in anthropology and beyond. The term *verstehen* (understanding or comprehension), developed within the German philosophical tradition, has often been used in social sciences to denote "understanding" as a form of cognitive activity that is applied to the study of human phenomena. The term is defined in contrast to the concept of "explanation", indicating the process of knowledge production that lies at the foundation of the natural sciences, aimed at determining the objective conditions of a phenomenon. In philosophy, the controversy between explaining and understanding had its point of departure in Dilthey's *Introduction to the Human Sciences* (1883), in which the dichotomy between explanation and comprehension was placed at the foundation of the distinction between natural sciences (*naturwissenschaften*) and human sciences (*geisteswissenschaften*, literally "sciences of the spirit"). A central concept of his argument was that of "lived experience", by which he asserted that human experience is determined by multiple relationships between the self and the world. In his view the sciences of the spirit, conceived on the model of history, would be engaged in

understanding human experience through a process of inwardly re-experiencing. Dilthey's theory, aimed at the epistemological foundation of human sciences, was a response to Stuart Mill's *System of Logic* (1843), where it was argued that humanities, defined as "moral sciences", should adopt the positivistic programme of the explicative method, in line with the model of natural sciences.

The epistemological dualism proposed by Dilthey was later reformulated by Wilhelm Windelband (1894), who suggested the distinction between "nomothetic" and "idiographic" sciences: whereas the former group would be devoted to the study of nature and the discovering of natural laws, the latter would be addressed to particular phenomena in their historically determined form, having history as their primary object of study. In his view, the dualistic division of sciences would take place on a methodological ground: while nomothetic sciences would be aimed at the definition of general laws, idiographic sciences would be concerned with the understanding of individual and unique events.

The controversy between explaining and understanding was brought into the field of social sciences by Max Weber (1904; 1906). Weber's conception of a "comprehensive sociology" was intended to avoid both the positivistic assimilation of social sciences to natural sciences, and the diltheyan qualification of the sciences of the spirit in psychological terms (Apel 2000). In order to ground the objectivity of social research without denying its specificity, Weber claimed that two preconditions had to be respected. The first is evaluative neutrality: in social research, the investigation of empirical facts should be clearly distinguished from value judgments. The second lies in the causal explanation of cultural phenomena, which does not stem from their connection to general laws (as it happens in natural sciences) but from the relation between specific historical phenomena.. In his view, therefore, the peculiar type of explanation employed by social sciences does not identify necessary causal factors, but the conditions that are relevant to the explanation of a cultural phenomenon. On this ground, the only criterion for determining the validity of an explanation would be its effectiveness for the knowledge of specific cultural phenomena, that is, its usefulness as an analytical tool. Ultimately, Weber's approach may be seen as the search for a methodological mediation between explaining and understanding (Apel 2000).

The work of Max Weber, along with the German hermeneutic philosophy, had a strong influence on the American anthropology. In the USA, Weber's theories were

acknowledged by anthropologists via Talcott Parsons, who was largely responsible for introducing them to the American public. Parsons studied with Alfred Weber (Max Weber's brother) at the University of Heidelberg, where he received his PhD in sociology with a dissertation on the work of Max Weber. Clifford Geertz, who is generally recognized as the founder of interpretative anthropology, was one of Parson's most prominent students at Harvard. The penchant for the idiographic perspective has been a mark of American anthropology since the particularistic approach endorsed by Franz Boas, himself a German, who was strongly influenced by German historicism. Furthermore, the interpretative anthropology promoted by Geertz and his students combined this particularistic inclination with multiple philosophical and literary influences, including the sociology of Max Weber. According to Geertz, anthropology is an interpretative endeavour aimed at deciphering the meaning of actual practices, on the basis of the encounter between observer and observed. As human actions are always embedded in larger constellations of meanings, ethnography would be an exercise of "thick description" (Geertz 1973), that is, a detailed picture of particular events within their own context, in order to make human behaviour meaningful to an outsider. Moreover, following Malinowski's recommendations, (Malinowski 2014 [1922]), Geertz stressed that a proper ethnographic interpretation should enable the reader to grasp the "native's point of view" (Geertz 1974), by describing the interplay of native meanings in their context. While maintaining the importance of *verstehen* in anthropology, Geertz, like Weber, rejected Dilthey's conception of a purely subjective comprehension. By contrast, conceiving culture as a text constituted by a texture of meanings, and produced by the interaction between subjects, Geertz emphasized the public nature of cultural meanings. Hence, within interpretative anthropology *verstehen* is less a subjective process than the outcome of the intersubjective dialogue emerging in the ethnographic encounter.

Despite the crucial influence of Geertz's position in the history of anthropology, the issue of the possibilities and limits of understanding have raised some critical arguments. Starting from a relativistic standpoint, many authors have questioned the real possibility of producing knowledge about ethnographic subjects without imposing the parochial background of the researcher upon them. This stance has been especially taken by scholars who have stressed the role of language in determining our perception and, ultimately, in building the world in which we live (Sapir 1929; Winch 2008 [1958]). A famous example of

linguistic relativism is the work of Benjamin Lee Whorf on the Hopi "model of the universe" (Whorf 1956), where the author illustrate how, on the basis of their grammar, the Hopi create their universe without reference to our categories of time and space. Thus, to the extent that what is true for the Hopi is not true for us, Whorf's remarks seem to imply the impossibility of a full translation.

In anthropology of religion this problem has a crucial relevance, and can be translated into the following question: is it possible to comprehend a religion from the outside, without sharing its system of values and beliefs? In other words, is it possible to understand religious experience without being an insider? The question of compatibleness between understanding and believing has raised many discussions, as in the case of the collective volume *Rationality* (Wilson 1970) which was at the origins of the so-called "rationality debate". Several arguments in the rationality debate were inspired by Wittgenstein's notions of "form of life" and "language game", and by his criticisms of Sir James Frazer's *The Golden Bough*. For the Austrian philosopher, a "form of life" is a universe of meaning, a way of being into the world that is typical of a specific human group, while a "language game" is the interweaving of language, actions and worldviews that is peculiar to a given form of life (Wittgenstein 2010 [1953]). The implications of Wittgenstein's thought for anthropology are especially evident in his statement that understanding a speech act is not possible outside its specific context of discourse. In other words, the rules governing a particular form of life are the only possible framework within which an outsider can decipher and describe the behaviour and thought of agents who belong to a specific human group. By contrast, when the observer evaluates a particular form of life with external standards of rationality, he or she will not understand the sense of a particular event or situation. For instance, according to Wittgenstein (1993) the explanation of the magical practices of the so-called primitive peoples given by Sir James Frazer in the *Golden Bough* was guilty of reductionism. Describing such practices as rational but mistaken attempts to explain and control nature, Frazer was thus reducing them to a form of primitive science, disregarding the religious practitioner's point of view. Wittgenstein seems to say that the researcher should refrain from attempting any explanation, and focus instead in merely grasping the meaning of the practices observed, trying to understand them in their own terms, from their specific contexts. For Alasdair MacIntyre (1970), the implication of these arguments for the anthropology of religion is that, as it is impossible for

the observer not to invoke the standards of his or her own social context, an outsider cannot fully understand a religion without believing in it. By contrast, according to Peter Winch (1970), a religion can be comprehended even without being – or becoming – an insider, to the extent that explanation may take many forms. Yet, analysts should keep in mind that a language-game itself cannot be explained or justified, but can only be observed and described. In other words, "forms of life are just different, and questions of 'truth' are relative to each culture's domain" (Springs 2008:940).

If Wittgenstein's reflections can be mentioned to ground the epistemological validity of comprehension in anthropology, a rigid interpretation of forms of life as closed and un-communicating universes of meaning would lead to radical forms of relativism. Indeed, taken to the extreme, this argument would call into question the possibility of ethnographic understanding itself.

A possible solution to this problem has been proposed by Ernesto De Martino, who analysed the fine line between understanding and misunderstanding within the ethnographic encounter through the concept of "critical ethnocentrism" (De Martino 1948). Since the 1940s Ernesto De Martino, who studied the peasant societies of southern Italy, proposed an ethnographic approach alternative to positivist social science. According to the Italian anthropologist, ethnology was not an objective and neutral science, but an intellectual creation carried out from the categorical lenses of the ethnographer, which are always historically determined. On the one hand, it is impossible for the anthropologist to abstract from his or her own cultural history, wherein, for example, rationality and empirical verification represent criteria of absolute truth. On the other hand, his/her task is precisely to subject these categories to a critical review, on the basis of the knowledge generated in the encounter with ethnographic subjects. For example, an ethnographer dealing with magic has the duty "to test the obvious assumption of the unreality of magic powers […], [because] the problem of the reality of magical powers does not regard just the quality of these powers, but also our own concept of reality" (De Martino 1948:21–22, cit in Saunders 2010).

In my fieldwork among the Evangelical Guinean community in Lisbon, I tried to take a demartinian stance. Following the suggestion of George Saunders (2010), I tried to question my "humanist assumptions about the unreality of supernatural religious experience" (Saunders 2010:33), in order to produce an ethnography based on a subjective understanding

of my interlocutors, and to give voice to their words as far as possible. This did not mean to take as "real" the Evangelical vision of the world. Instead, my aim was to create a dialogue in which the Evangelical and my own humanist worldview had equal right to exist, despite their mutual differences. A dialogue in which both parties were committed to overcome "the mutual impenetrability of two cosmovisions", so that everyone could "understand the point of view of the other and at the same time could review its own categories of analysis" (ibid.). In this sense, in the dispute between explaining and understanding I placed myself decidedly on the side of understanding, although I tried to avoid the swamps of radical relativism. After all, as it would have been impossible for me to overcome my humanistic mindset, I did not reach a full understanding of Evangelical faith "from the inside". However, I sought to practice a "critical ethnocentrism", giving credit to my interlocutors' beliefs without giving up my cognitive categories, but calling them into question in the face of the irreducibility of religious experience.

On ambiguity in anthropology: ethical reflections

If one the one hand the episode that marked the beginning of my fieldwork let me wonder how to understand religious phenomena without sharing the same belief system, on the other it also urged me to consider the ethical and political dimensions of ethnography.

As Michael Carrithers (2005) points out, to the extent that each ethnographic relationship necessarily involves an ethical dimension, a sort of "moral aesthetic" emerges spontaneously in the fieldwork. It is a personal ethics coming from the experience of mutuality produced in the interaction with the subjects of anthropological research. As a necessary condition for carrying out fieldwork as an interpersonal encounter, this moral aesthetic involves the building of relationships based on respect and reciprocal trust, recognition of the other's value and mutual forbearance. This mutuality is particularly important in contemporary ethnographies, where the informants themselves, more often than in the past, are potential readers and subjects of anthropological research. Today "what is said about people cannot differ too much from what is said to people" (Carrithers 2005: 439).

During his fieldwork with Italian Pentecostals, George Saunders realized that the interests involved in the ethnographic encounter were reciprocal, however conflicting. As he wittily observed, the Pentecostals "were intent in their work at least as I was in mine": on the

one hand, the anthropologist wanted to listen to the stories of the religious experiences of his interlocutors; on the other, the believers wanted the researcher to talk about himself. As pointed out by Saunders, in spite of his efforts to be honest about his lack of faith, a degree of ambiguity was inevitable. The author describes his fieldwork as an attempt to maintain a compromise between adherence and distancing in relation to the religious experiences in which he participated:

> I sang hymns with them [...] but kept a respectful silence during the prayer; I did not ask for healing, even if I let them pray for me when they asked to do so; I recognized a 'possibility' to their beliefs, but [...] I never said that I shared them [...]. *I did not 'believe', but belief in some way can also be expressed in action, and what divides belief from action is at best a thin line* (Saunders 2010:41).

The ambiguity inherent in the experience of faith has to do with the element of doubt that is inevitably contained in the act of believing. As Pastor Eliseu told me, many people are not really converted even after baptism, and only God can enter into the hearts of men. Participating in a ritual situation does not necessary mean to believe or to pretend to believe. On the contrary, it means to "give credit" to the others' beliefs. At the same time, accepting a certain degree of ambivalence means knowing that the adherence of individuals to the system of practices and beliefs contained in religious doctrines is never total. Instead, each single believer finds personal and creative modes of living his own spiritual experience.

When I began my research on Guinean Evangelical Christianity in Lisbon, I was expecting that my personal experiences with regards to religion could become a topic of discussion with the people with whom I would come into contact. One of my major concerns was how to justify my lack of faith to believers. Over the course of my fieldwork, I met believers who did not understand how people like me could live without any form of religiosity. Atheism for them was nonsense. While talking with these people I never defined myself as an atheist, but rather as an agnostic. As observed by my advisor Ramon Sarró in one of our conversations, religious people "consider atheism and materialism an insult; they feel outraged if someone says that he does not believe in God" (see also Sarró 2007). Ruy Blanes (2006) articulated this problem as a general methodological question, that of "the involvement of personal beliefs and attitudes in anthropological theory and practice, and their consequences not only for the production and publicisation of scientific knowledge but also

for the construction of personal relationships and social interaction during ethnographic practice" (Blanes 2006:224). According to the author, within ethnographic fieldwork beliefs (or the lack of them) are negotiated through a daily communicational process, which is built on a dialectic of distance and proximity. It is with these tensions that anthropological production should come to terms, in order to fulfil its strategies and expectations. Over the course of his fieldwork among the members of the Igreja Filadélfia[10] between Lisbon and Madrid, as a non-believer anthropologist Blanes was confronted with the proselytizing advances that the believers made to him. Despite the tension involved in defending himself from such approaches, these constant interactions led him to understand the doctrinal grounds of Evangelical proselytism. As dogmatic and propagandistic they might seem, phrases such as "God has a plan for you" or "Let God open your door" are grounded on a deep doctrinal base: "preaching the Gospel to everyone possible is not just a matter of choice, but in biblical exegesis a moral obligation of the believer and demonstration of commitment to the church" (Blanes 2006:228).

These remarks show how, in line with the insights of reflexive anthropology, the protean ways in which the ethnographer of religion might negotiate his or her position in a specific fieldwork depend on his or her personal spiritual background, as well as on the mission strategies peculiar to specific religious traditions. Besides these elements, the need for the anthropologist to justify his or her presence as an outsider in a given religious community has to do with particular historical circumstances. In other words, the process of dialogical interaction between the researcher and his or her interlocutors is also – and inevitably – framed by a social and political context.

In the case of the Evangelical scene in Lisbon, the specific conditions of the interaction between outsiders and insiders at the turn of the millennium contained many elements of conflict. In the Portuguese capital, while the public debate about religious difference was in part conditioned by the events of September 11 of 2001 (although to a lesser extent than in other European countries, due to the relative invisibility of Muslim communities in the Portuguese public space), it was especially influenced by particular local circumstances. In 1989, the Brazilian pastor Paulo Roberto Guimarães founded in Lisbon the

[10] The Igreja Evangélica Filadélfia is a Charismatic Pentecostal movement, which in the last decades had a great success among gipsy communities between Portugal and Spain (Blanes 2008).

first temple of the Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus[11] (Mafra 2002). Between 1994 and 1995, IURD began an expanding policy in the Portuguese urban areas and media, founding temples in emblematic and clearly visible places in Lisbon and Porto, and buying radio and television channels. This expansionist strategy was successful, and IURD gained many members not only in the Brazilian community but also among the Portuguese population. Nevertheless, it provoked a controversial reaction in the media and in public opinion, in part influenced and guided by Catholic Church. The result was the stigmatization and exclusion from public life not only of IURD, but also of other Evangelical denominations. This climate of hostility engendered a counter-reaction from the Evangelical community in general, who developed an attitude of distrust towards those from outside - journalists or anthropologists – who were interested in describing and representing them. In her research on IURD between Brazil and Portugal, Clara Mafra had to deal with this climate of conflict, so that in her relationship with the believers she decided not to identify herself as an anthropologist, but as a "travelling believer" (Mafra 2002:25).

As demonstrated by the debate prompted by the irruption of IURD on the Portuguese public scene, today, in cosmopolitan European cities, people coming from the global South in search of a better life are constantly confronted with the knowledge produced on them by the media and public opinion. In such representations, religious difference is often used to mark distances and construct boundaries of citizenship. In this context, as pointed out by João Pina Cabral, the metropolitan ethnographer faces "a diplomatic challenge, [...] that requires an open attitude to understand the motivations of the others and to negotiate common ways of comprehension" (Pina Cabral 2006:186). This diplomatic challenge has to do with the people's urge to control both the ethnographer's presence on the field and the knowledge produced on them, a knowledge that is potentially uncomfortable. The ethnographer is faced with the challenge of finding a compromise between the legitimate claims of the subjects of his research, and his duty to produce a transparent scientific knowledge. At the same time, he or she has the ethical and political task of counteracting the simplifications often found in public discourses on cultural and religious differences.

[11] The IURD is a Neo-Pentecostal church founded in Brazil in the late 70's, which since the 90s is expanding globally and building a vast transnational network. Today the IURD has congregations around the world, with a particularly strong presence in Portuguese speaking countries.

An emblematic example of how, in today's cosmopolitan world, discourses about socio-cultural difference may become means of identity construction, as well as instruments of political strategy, is the debate on the Christian roots of Europe. On the geopolitical level, the insistence on a supposed Christian identity of Europe is used as an argument to restrict and enforce the borders of Europe, ideally separating it from the rest of the world (Sarró and Blanes 2008; Blanes and Mapril 2013). On the level of domestic policy, the rhetoric on Christian identity is used to confirm the internal boundaries of citizenship, and to legitimize policies of exclusion against migrants. In this context, studies on African Christianity in Europe have a vital political significance and a topical interest, which is to relativize the monolithic and Eurocentric image of Christianity. Furthermore, by showing the internal diversity of Christianity, a plurality inextricably linked to its original universalistic drive and to its multiple appropriations over the centuries, such works bring to light the general tendency of religions to exceed the boundaries of places and identities.

Theoretical framework: the anthropology of Christianity

This dissertation contributes to different types of anthropological literature. Firstly, it is largely based on the anthropology of Christianity, with a special focus on the recent studies on the Evangelical and Pentecostal movements in Africa and in the African diaspora. In particular, it refers to the current literature on African Christianity in Europe. Secondly, it reviews the historical, political and anthropological literature on colonialism and post-colonialism in Guinea-Bissau, Thirdly, it connects to long-standing debates on the topics of conversion and modernity. Fourthly, it refers to recent developments in the anthropology of migration, as well as to authors who reflect on the subjective condition of migrant. Fifthly, it makes reference to the spatial turn in anthropology, and to authors who analyse the correlations between religion, space and place. Finally, it dialogues with the recent anthropology of the future, in order to explore the specific temporality experienced by Evangelical Guineans, both in their homeland and in the diaspora.

As observed by Fenella Cannell (2006a), since the beginnings of the discipline the anthropological perspective on Christianity has been marred by biases and preconceptions. The author attributes these problems to the peculiar relationship between anthropology and theology. Anthropology, as part of the social sciences, defined itself from its origins as

opposed to theology, and in particular to Christian doctrine. Anthropological theories on Christianity were thus influenced by this original act of separation, and found it hard to reach successful outcomes when they considered Christianity as an ethnographic object. As a result, Christianity would have functioned as "the repressed" in the history of anthropology (Cannell 2006:4). Early Africanist anthropologists, in their search for authenticity, often neglected the presence of Protestant and Catholic missions in the contexts they were studying. More generally, as it was viewed as too familiar and too threatening at the same time, Christianity has often been treated as a secondary phenomenon with respect to political and economic spheres. Consequently, a trend towards reductionism has prevailed on the matter: the various manifestations of Christianity have been accounted for based on external explanatory models, and have rarely been interpreted in the terms of religious experience itself.

In recent years, however, many anthropologists started to address a critical study of Christianity, bringing to light new issues and debates. Talal Asad (1993) examined the Islamic and Christian elements underlying the anthropological categories of religion, ritual and belief. Other authors have analysed Christian notions of self and personhood (Robbins 2004; Csordas 1997).Furthermore, an intense debate has emerged on the themes of temporalities and the nature of Christian conversion, whose starting point may be traced back to Birgit Meyer's article "Make a Complete Break with the Past" (1998). Meyer's commentators have discussed her argument, according to which conversion involves a clear rupture with the past, and converts move from a "cyclical" to a "lineal" sense of time (Coleman 2000; Meyer 1998; Engelke and Robbins 2010). Ruth Marshall (2009) has explored the peculiar political agency of new forms of Christianity, focusing on the case of Nigerian Pentecostalism. Other scholars have studied the topics of gender, family, love and sexuality in different Christian traditions, wondering if the expansion of Christianity introduced new gender patterns and new notions of marriage, nuclear family and love in the contexts where it was established (Bochow and Dijk 2012; Kamp 2011) (Bochow and van Dijk 2012; Van de Kamp 2011).

More in general, many authors have recently questioned the assumption, widely shared in the classic anthropological tradition, that Christianity has "clear, inherent properties leading to repeatable effects when it is introduced into other societies around the world (Cannell 2006b:5). On the one hand, historians of the Church have shown how Christianity's

doctrine and practice has been in constant evolution, as testified by early theological controversies and the continuous dialectic between orthodoxy and heresy. On the other hand, the encounter between Christianity and the different cultural contexts in which it takes hold has given rise to new configurations and scenarios. Based on these remarks, anthropologists are increasingly viewing Christianity as a historically complex subject, whose characteristics change depending on the context in which it is embedded. In this sense, it may be more correct to speak of "Christianities" in the plural, rather than "Christianity" in the singular.

As observed by Fenella Cannel (2006), among the assumptions that have affected most anthropological theories in the past has been the paradigm of Christianity as a religion of transcendence. One of the most famous formulations of this thesis is that of Hegel (2000 [1807]), which credited Christianity for introducing in history a new type of relationship between man, the world and the divine. If in earlier religions, such as the Greek one, the divine was seen as immanent, in Christianity the divine is conceived as belonging to a transcendent and higher order, radically incommensurable with the human world. The absolute separation between man and God would then be the source of human "unhappy consciousness", that is, the acknowledgement of the absence of God in this life, an absence that can be overcome only in death. However, Christianity may also include a more immanent stance, as demonstrated by the studies on the "prosperity wave" within global Pentecostalism, wherein health and wealth assume a new centrality in the life of Christians (Csordas 1992; Marshall 2009; Corten and Marshall-Fratani 2003).

Within the anthropological tradition, another unspoken assumption is that the Western link between modernity and Christianity is reproduced in the same way in the rest of the world. This postulation stems from a rigid interpretation of the thesis, shared by authors like Weber and Dumont, of an original relationship between capitalism, modernity and Christianity. According to Fenella Cannell, although the historical connection between Christianity and modernity is undeniable, the meaning of Christianity should not be reduced to theories of modernity. At the same time, the Weberian thesis of a progressive secularization of the public sphere should be called into question. As Cannel pointed out, the unveiling of unquestioned assumptions that have characterized anthropological theories over the years – such as a vision of Christianity rigidly anchored to theories of modernity or the paradigm of Christianity as a religion of transcendence - is a prerequisite for an anthropological study of

"the experiences of Christianity, in all their diversity, complexity and singularity, for what they are" (Cannell 2006b:45).

The renewed interest in Christianity on the part of anthropologists, as well as the recent inclination to conceive Christianity in the plural, has been influenced by current changes in the global Christian scene. In this respect, many authors have remarked how contemporary Christianity is involved in a double trend: on the one hand, the shift of its gravity centre from Europe and Northern America to Africa, Asia and Latin America, a process that has been called the "southernization of Christianity" (Jenkins 2011; Jenkins 2006); on the other hand, the emergence of new forms of Christianity in Europe and the USA, in the wake of migration movements.

In Europe, the so-called "African Churches" are among the more visible phenomena of this polycentric globalization, and contitute the object of several pioneer studies (Van Dijk 1997; van Dijk 2004; Ter Haar 1998; Cox and Haar 2003; Ter Haar 2008; Adogame 1998; Adogame 2004). The first African Churches in Europe were born between the 1970s and the 1980s under the initiative of Christian African migrants, whose spiritual and material needs could find no response in pre-existent religious congregations (Fancello and Mary 2010). Since the 1990s, these religious communities have drawn the attention of secular authorities, concerned by the limitation of religious plurality and the regulation of public space, as well as academic scholars, interested in understanding in which ways an African Christian identity is constructed in religious diasporic communities. Anthropological studies have resulted in various designations to identify the churches attended by African migrants, such as "African International Churches", introduced by Gerrie Ter Haar (1998) to render the international and universal ambition expressed by their leaders, and "Churches of African origin in the Diaspora", proposed by Benjamin Simon (2002, 2010) to account for the generational turn-over and the long-term scope within these communities.

One of the crucial issues addressed by these works has been the ambivalent processes through which an African Christian identity is constructed within diasporic congregations. What is the role of Christianity and missionary interaction in the construction of these identities? Is the category of Africanity a simple assignation by Europeans or, on the contrary, is it an important element in the self-representations of these religious communities? Gerrie ter Haar (1998, 2003, 2008), noted that in the Dutch context the idea that African Christians

are a type of religious community based on ethnic grounds is not so much linked to a wish of their members to maintain their African identity. On the contrary, this may be read as an attempt by Dutch society to preserve the integrity of its own borders. If on the one hand the most common label attached by outsiders to churches attended by African migrants is that of "African churches", on the other this categorization is often rejected by the congregations themselves, who prefer the designation of "International Churches". This last definition would express their desire to be part of an international world, where they believe to carry out a universal task: the evangelizing mission towards a European society that, in their view, has lost the Gospel's way. By contrast, the category of "African International Churches" has the advantage of taking into account both their African origin and their continuity with the universal Christian tradition. According to ter Haar, the use of the category of ethnicity to refer to this type of churches is attributable to European interests. Accordingly, if for African Christians their adherence to Christianity is the central element of their public identity, Dutch society's insistence on ethnic identity at the expense of a common Christian identity stems from a drive to segregate African communities. This runs counter the general quest for integration expressed by foreigners, while being consistent with the efforts of European immigration policies to erect material and symbolic walls between Europe and Africa, and between Europeans and Africans, with the aim of excluding migrants who aspire to share the European wellbeing. The theory of a fundamental difference between the European "self" and the African "other" legitimizes this policy of exclusion, and the category of ethnicity can work as a substitute for the discredited concept of race to establish differences between human populations. In this sense, the equation between cultural difference and ethnicity may become an instrument of political and social power to deny the legitimacy of migrant's claims on resources.

Another critical perspective on the construction of ethnicity in public discourses and literature on African Christianity in Europe and the United States is provided by Nina Glick Schiller. In her article "Beyond the ethnic lens" (Schiller et al. 2006), the author questions the centrality of the category of ethnicity in migration studies, and proposes an approach much concerned with non-ethnic forms of settlement and their connections with specific urban contexts. According to Glick Schiller, studies on migration and diaspora have mainly focused on specific ethnic populations with shared identities, on the basis of the assumption that

migrants live in separate "ethnic communities", which are by definition culturally and socially different from the surrounding societies. In the case of Pentecostalism, and in spite of many studies showing the tendency of congregations formed by migrants to build their identity in terms of a universal Christianity regardless of ethnic connotations, several authors have characterized these religious communities as African, Nigerian or Ghanaian (Adogame 2002, Van Dijk 2004). According to Glick Schiller, this contradiction is due to the fact that studies of African Christianity in Europe have generally used the ethnic group as an object of study and unit of analysis. Based on this perspective, the beliefs and practices of Christian migrants are interpreted only in relation to the conditions in the countries of origin or in the migratory context. Consequently, the experiences shared by the members of a local congregation, migrants and natives, remain unclear, as well as the similarities between "African" churches and other congregations that are not ethnically connoted. Moving beyond the ethnic paradigm, Glick Schiller proposes an approach based on the analysis of those processes by which migrants build and maintain networks of social relations that link them to local and global institutions. In this view, migrants who belong to churches and "born-again" networks are seen as choosing a "mode of incorporation" that does not emphasize their differentiation from local people, but unites them to the natives in a common Christian identity that sees them as "conveyors of morality, virtue, and godliness in a godless land" (Schiller, Çaglar, and Guldbrandsen 2006:625). As Glick-Shiller continues, "[b]y choosing to emphasize a Christian universalism rather than an ethnic particularism, some migrants sought way to become incorporated as local and global actors on their own terms" (ibid.).

Undoubtedly, the aspirations of African Christians in the diaspora to Christian universalism are a common element of their self-representations. And yet, as observed by Sandra Fancello and André Mary, "to rush [...] on the assertion of an essentially Christian primary identity [...] means, above all, to do a lot of concession to the actors' speeches, to eliminate their ambiguities and their oscillations, and especially to privilege the acts of enunciation of the pastors engaged in strategies of recognition or demarcation in the field of the 'new Churches'" (Fancello and Mary 2010: 14). As a matter of fact, many studies have shown a contrast between the recurrent rhetoric of universality on the one side, and the objective reality of the congregations exclusively formed by African migrants on the other (Adogame 2000, Koning 2009). In other words, the "reversed mission" discourses, which

portray Europe as a missionary field for African Christians, would collide with the difficulty of these churches to carry out missionary action beyond the borders between migrants and natives. Following on from this, it would seem that the affinities among African members in terms of identity prevail over the mission thrust towards their European neighbours (Fancello and Mary 2010). Many hypotheses have been formulated to explain the modest successes of African missionary initiative towards Europeans, some of which will be summarized in Chapter 6. For the moment, suffice is to say that while the link with Africa remains central in most churches, the degree of openness towards the surrounding society is extremely variable, depending on the origins and the nationalities of their members, as well as the language of cult and their expansion strategies. At the same time, the specific features of the local context in which the congregations are settled contribute to determine the conditions of the religious encounter. As a result, the actual social structure and composition of these assemblies may range from churches made up of 80% Nigerians and Yoruba, like the Redeemed Christian Church of God in London (Coleman and Maier 2013), to more plural and truly international congregations, like the Universal Church in Geneva (Rey 2010). Within this wide spectrum, the Missão Evangélica Lusófona in Lisbon situates itself in an intermediate position, being mostly formed by members of Guinean origins, but gaining more and more followers among migrants from other Lusophone countries, such as Sao Tomé, Angola, Cape Verde and Brasil.

Metodology

In this research, I examined the Missão Evangélica Lusófona as a case-study. That is to say, I focused on the case of MEL as a specific example of how Evangelical Guineans living in Lisbon experience their spirituality and, more in general, of how African Christians give birth to religious communities and build their identities in the diaspora.

The origins of the case studies method in anthropology are generally traced back to Max Gluckman and the Manchester School of Social Anthropology. The method was intended to use ethnographical material in a new way: while former anthropological studies used to cite ethnographic examples to illustrate general statements, Gluckman proposed to reverse the correlation between case and statement, turning the case into the first step of ethnographical analysis. In an article where he discussed this method, Gluckman (1961) drew a distinction between three different uses of case material. The “method of apt illustration”,

which had been employed by the first generation of British anthropologists, consists in the illustrative use of case material, aimed at supporting general assumptions through a description of single events, selected for their appropriateness in the argument and isolated from their connection with other incidents. By contrast, Gluckman and his students introduced two new ways of using ethnographic cases: the analysis of "social situations" and the "extended case method". The former is the process through which a complex series of events that took place in a restricted time span is described and used to reveal the way in which general social principles manifest themselves in a specific context. A classic example of this method is Gluckman's description and analysis of the ceremonial opening of a newly-built bridge in Zululand in 1935 (Gluckman 1958). In this text, the author used a complex series of events to illustrate the extent to which Zulu and Whites were involved in a single social system. Through the analysis of social situations, Glukman and his students used the actions of individuals and groups to illustrate the "morphology of the social structure" at large. The underlying assumption was that "one good case can illuminate the working of a social system in a way that a series of morphological statements cannot achieve" (Gluckman 2006:9). Yet, the fullest use of the case-method would be the extended case study, which consists in analysing a sequence of events over a long period of time, where the same actors are involved in a series of situations in which the social relations among them are changing. By showing how specific individuals, actions and events are linked to one another through time, this method brings into light the processual aspect of social systems. Following on from Gluckman and the Manchester school, the method of case studies has been extensively used in anthropology. Nowadays, the term is commonly used to denote any detailed analysis of a wide range of phenomena, including a single life story or a set of actors engaged in a sequence of connected events, over a restricted or extended period of time. In this broader sense, the case study is marked by the unitary character of the object of study, the focus on the actors and their roles, and the attention to ethnographical detail. Accordingly, this attention to detail has the advantage of giving the fieldworker a clear and specific empirical focus, enabling him or her to reach general statements via a process of induction, and to control the risk of theoretical biases (Evens and Handelman 2006; Mitchell 2006). According to Clyde Mitchell (who was also an adherent to the Manchester School) the reliability of case studies does not lie in statistical inference. On the contrary, the validity of the extrapolation from a

specific case to larger social processes depends on the strength of its theoretical reasoning: "the rich detail which emerges from the intimate knowledge the analyst must acquire in a case study if it is well conducted provides the optimum conditions for the acquisition of those illuminating insights which make formerly opaque connections suddenly pellucid" (Mitchell 2006:40).

The point of the dialectic between specific/concrete and general/abstract in the case-study method has been restated by Christian Lund (Lund 2014)(2014). According to the author, far from being an inert material, a case is always intellectually constructed, to the extent that a discrete set of events and actions are "marked out, emphasized, and privileged while others recede into the background" (Lund 2014: 224). At the same time, the analysis of an ethnographic case can give rise to many claims, which are a combination of specific, general, concrete, and abstract dimensions, and which represent different intellectual enterprises: immediate observations, observations of patterns, conceptualizations, and theorizations. In Lund's description, the process of the case-study analysis goes from observations through patterns and concepts to theory, and return. Put in other terms, Lund illustrates the method of case study as a feedback mechanism, wherein we dialogue with other scholars to the extent that we build our case-study on the basis of general questions stated by others. At the same time, resonance with other cases in different localities or different times may help us to generalize, abstract, and theorize on our own. Hence, as the author points out, "theoretical questions help to deduce critical areas of inquiry, and detailed field research of an inductive nature allows us to investigate concrete dynamics" (ibid: 231). In this frame, the validity of the conceptual claims arising from the analysis of our case material would be neither proof nor prediction, but utility: "if the conceptual framework can make sense of the analysed data, and especially, if it can helps others to better understand their own work in different contexts, it is very successful" (ibid: 228).

Although I decided to focus my research on MEL, MEL is not the only church frequented by Evangelical Guinean migrants in the Greater Lisbon area, as I will illustrate in chapter 4. By focusing my analysis on a particular congregation, I have delimited my primary object of study in order to achieve that intimacy with the subjects of study which, in anthropology, is commonly held as the condition for a detailed ethnographic description, as well as for the emergence of meaningful insights and general statements. By selecting a

community of around one hundred people, I intended to focus my attention on a restricted group of actors, in order to achieve that "thick description" that, in Geertz's terms, is the hallmark of ethnography. At the same time, by giving a general outline of the multiple strategies of integration enacted by Evangelical Guineans living in Lisbon, and by occasionally comparing MEL with other religious organizations, I hope to address issues which are common to the Evangelical Guinean community in Lisbon as a whole.

My primary fieldwork occurred in Lisbon between 2010 and 2012. In addition, I spent one month in Bissau at the beginning of 2013 in order to document the history of the Evangelical minority in Guinea-Bissau. In Lisbon, I mostly conducted participant observation in worship and other church activities performed by MEL. In addition, I attended cults and social meetings in other congregations frequented by Guinean believers, as well as in Evangelical Guinean associations. Finally, I realized eighteen in-depth interviews with Evangelical believers of Guinean origins (most of whom were MEL's members), one interview to an Evangelical leader coming from São Tomé, and seven interviews with Portuguese inhabitants and civil officers who were living or working in Vale do Forno. In Bissau, I had the opportunity to explore the context from which my interlocutors were coming and with whom they were maintaining enduring connections. I participated in Evangelical cults, and I conducted twenty interviews with religious leaders. Out of a total of forty-six interviews between Lisbon and Bissau, twenty-four were life-story interviews, while twenty-two were focused on more specific topics. Hence, the bulk of my ethnographical material is constituted by fieldwork notes on the one hand, and recordings of sermons, services and interviews on the other. As a result, most of my dissertation is about stories and story-telling: individual stories, family stories, community stories, Evangelical testimonies and sermons grounded on biblical stories. This focus on stories reflects a central aspect of Evangelical spirituality, wherein the narrative dimension plays a crucial role. As observed by Ruth Marshall (2009), for instance, Nigerian Pentecostalism is marked by a proliferation of narratives based on global repertoires, and enounced in sermons, prophecies, testimonies, prayers, pamphlets and songs. More in general, as stressed by Peter Stromberg (1993), conversion narrative itself is a crucial element of Evangelical conversion, given that through conversion narratives believers try to resolve their emotional conflicts by reframing their experience in terms of the language of Evangelical Christianity. Although these stories are

partly inspired by a global genre, at the same time they recall specific issues, connected with historical circumstances and local meanings.

Most of my interlocutors were either religious leaders or active members in their congregations. This aspect is the outcome of my methodological choices, as well as of situations specific to my fieldwork. In Lisbon, one of the first people I met was MEL's minister, Pastor Eliseu Gomes. Eliseu soon became my "gate-keeper", thus exerting a certain degree of discretion in selecting the people with whom I subsequently came in contact. In Bissau, as I was interested in documenting the history of the Guinean Evangelical community, my key interlocutors were also Evangelical leaders. As a result, my research turned to be largely "church-based", reproducing the perspective of the most active members of the congregation, and neglecting to a considerable extent the point of view of more marginal worshippers, both at home and in the diaspora. In other words, my analysis describes a perspective which can be called "hegemonic" within the Guinean Evangelical world, overlooking the point of view of those believers who occupy a marginal position in this context. This, I recognize, is certainly one of the limits of my work. The hope is that future investigations will complete the picture, portraying this social milieu through the eyes of more peripheral actors.

A final remark concerns the geographical and chronological scope of my work. To the extent that most of my ethnographical material is the product of a flow of ideas, stories and people between Lisbon and Bissau, the larger horizon of my study is similar to what Arjun Appadurai (Appadurai 1996) has called "diasporic public sphere", that is, a space of circulation of ideas and people that escape the territorial logic of the nation-state. Even though the focus of my research was MEL, I tried to situate my object of study with constant references to wider contexts: the Vale do Forno neighbourhood, the Evangelical Guinean community in Lisbon, the Evangelical minority in Guinea-Bissau. At the same time, by retracing the past of individuals, families and communities in their homeland, and by exploring their future aspirations, I sought to cast light on their diasporic present.

The organization of the dissertation

The first chapter, prevalently based on oral history, describes the trajectory of the Evangelical movement in Guinea-Bissau, against the background of the post-independence history of the

country. In particular, I trace the complex changes experienced by the movement back to the crisis of the post-colonial state in Guinea-Bissau. By illustrating the context of insecurity engendered by the collapse of the state in post-independence time, I analyse the context in which the movement evolved from a narrow and marginal minority into an influential religious community, more and more present in the public arena. Finally, I examine the growth of Evangelical Christianity against the background of a general shift to universal religions, as well as a common aspiration to global connections.

In the second chapter, I examine the history of the Evangelical Guinean movement by focusing on the issue of conversion. I thus dig into the past of my interlocutors, exploring their personal and familiar stories and analysing their narratives of conversion. Grounded on life histories, the chapter examines this ethnographical material in the light of the theoretical debate on conversion, as well as of the literature on ethnicity and religion in the Upper Guinean Coast. Based of the analysis of these narratives, I argue that one of the major motivations which led many of my interlocutors to adopt Evangelical Christianity, abandoning their previous religious affiliations, is the fear to be a victim of occult attacks, and the resulting desire to escape from it. Finally I notice how, as they progressively disconnect from local ties, new chances of global connections open up for the converts, which are provided by their affiliation to Evangelical networks.

Besides the fear of nefarious bonds, another crucial factor in the shift to Evangelical Christianity is the desire to join a religion which is viewed as "modern". The third chapter looks at the appeal of Evangelical Christianity for Guinean believers, focusing on the association between Evangelical narratives and local discourses about modernity. After drawing a brief outline of the wider literature on modernity, I review the scholarship on the relationship between Christianity, colonialism, and modernity in Africa. Then, following the insights of authors who propose to conceive modernity as a local idiom rather than as an analytical tool, I try to illustrate how modernity is understood by Evangelical Guineans, focusing on the Kriol notion of *desenvolvimento* (development). Lastly, I interpret the adoption of Evangelical Christianity as a way of being modern through religion. To this purpose, I show how the access to international Christian networks is commonly associated with a set of "modern" features, including improvement of life conditions, new models of

intergenerationaland gender relations, emerging family forms, promotion of individual autonomy and increased opportunities of physical mobility.

With the fourth chapter, I start getting towards the central part of my thesis, focused on the ethnography of MEL as an example of an African Christian congregation in the diaspora. In this section, I describe MEL's history, organization and social setting against the background of the Portuguese religious landscape, with a special focus on the metropolitan area of Lisbon. At the same time, I make a portrait of the Evangelical Guinean community in Lisbon at large, illustrating the multiple strategies of religious integration of Guinean Evangelicals in the Portuguese capital. Finally, I depict the social actions performed by MEL in the neighbourhood where it is settled, analysing the ambivalent relationship between the church and the local institutions.

If the fourth chapter is written from a "church-based" standpoint, the fifth returns to a subject-centred perspective. Accordingly, this section takes as its starting point the general issue of the migrant condition, using literature on this topic to analyse the peculiar ways in which the condition of stranger is experienced by Guinean migrants in Lisbon. To this purpose, I describe the social and cultural features of the Guinean community in Portugal, as well as the historical circumstances of its emergence. Then, reflecting on what can be considered as the double dimension of the migrant condition, I argue that the life of Guinean migrants in Lisbon is marked by a dialectic of adventure and nostalgia. Lastly, I show how this dialectic acquires specific features in the case of Evangelical Guinean believers.

The sixth chapter constitutes the core of my dissertation, and is dedicated to the topic of space. Here, I take the case of MEL as an example of the role of an African church, as a religious and social agent, in a suburb of a European city. Firstly, I introduce the subject by referring to the "spatial turn" in anthropology, and by showing how much of the recent literature on space and place is marked by an apparent paradox between mobility and locality. Secondly, I draw on scholars who studied the ways in which space is turned into place though religion, showing how religion enables people to move and to make homes at the same time. Thirdly, I describe how spatial marginalization has been produced in the metropolitan area of Lisbon, with a special focus on Vale do Forno neighbourhood, where a peculiar social configuration emerged over time, marked by a dualism between firstcomers and latecomers. Fourthly, I explore the ways in which MEL appropriates and transforms the urban space

wherein it is located, analysing the interplay between MEL's believers - mostly, but not entirely, of Guinean origin - Portuguese inhabitants of the area, and local institutions. Building on this, I try to explain the failure of mission attempts towards Portuguese neighbours. Fifthly, and finally, I show how the Evangelical worldview enables MEL's members to counter their marginal condition via a discourse of salvation.

The seventh chapter is centred on the issue of time. While the previous ones are concerned with the past and the present in the lives of my interlocutors, this chapter looks into their future. Basically, it is an inquiry into the peculiar ways in which Evangelical Guinean believers - both in the homeland and in the diaspora - are engaged in imagining, thinking and producing their future. Firstly, I focus on the Evangelical minority in Guinea-Bissau, arguing that the particular and manifold vision of time of Evangelical Guineans results from the intersection of particular historical and cultural circumstances on the one hand, and from peculiar ideas about the future and hope whose origin can be traced back to the Christian tradition on the other. Secondly, I analyse the representations of the future of Evangelical Guinean migrants, emphasising the tension between private and collective dimension of the future in their life projects.

Up to this point I reviewed the conditions, methodological choices and theoretical framework underlying my research, and outlined some of its content. I now conclude this introduction by listing its weaknesses. I have already mentioned how, being largely "church-based", my ethnography reflects the perspective of the most active members of the congregation, while neglecting the point of view of more marginal worshippers. Another limitation of my research has been the use of the Portuguese rather than Kriol language in the interaction with my interlocutors. Although I acquired a rudimentary knowledge of Kriol, and I went deeper into the meaning of some concepts, I conducted all the interviews in Portuguese, and my everyday interactions with people were also in Portuguese. Lack of time, and good knowledge of Portuguese on the part of my interlocutors are some of the reasons that may be adduced to my slowness in learning Kriol. However, while it would have been impossible to learn all the local languages spoken by MEL's members, a better knowledge of Kriol would have lead to a deeper understanding of their world. Furthermore, the need to translate from Portuguese to English resulted in an inescapable simplification and imprecision in term of meanings, especially when reporting direct quotes from the actors. Ultimately, this

work shares the same challenges of other studies based on fieldworks "at home" (de Lima and Sarró 2006). One the one hand, insofar I carried out my fieldwork in a metropolitan context, I could not build the same kind of everyday intimacy with my interlocutors as it could have been the case in a more contained environment. On the other hand, to the extent that my private and personal life took place in the proximity of the place of investigation, it has been difficult to separate my ethnographic endeavours from my daily obligations as a member of a family and a citizen. As stressed by Antónia de Lima and Ramon Sarró, "in this [urban] situation, more than in other ones, the personal dimensions of the anthropologist's life are more imbricated in his/her ontological experiences in the field" (de Lima and Sarró 2006:24). In addition, due to the work commitments of many believers, our meetings were mainly limited to week-ends and non-working days. As a result, while I have established closer relationships with some of my interlocutors, the interaction with the subjects of my study was mostly limited to church activities, scheduled interviews, festive events like marriages and holydays, and casual encounters.

A last remark regards the bracketing of the gender dimension in my study. Although up to now the pastoral office has been limited to men - both in Guinea-Bissau and in Portugal – women are among the most active members, occupying the middle and lower ranks within the congregations. In addition, all the churches I visited seemed to have a prevalently female membership. With hindsight, I could have given greater prominence to the theme of gender, which seems to be an important issue in this milieu. Stemming from my initial, almost total ignorance of the context, other concerns seemed more urgent and compelling in the course of my research. The hope is that future inquiries may fill this gap, by providing a more gender-oriented portrait of this religious field.

In spite of these limitations, I tried to do my best given the specific circumstances of my research, something that is, I think, a general condition for most ethnographies. Much like an artisan, I created a mosaic from an incomplete number of tiles, seeking to figure out the missing pieces in order to draw the complete picture. Another ethnographer, interacting with other actors, would probably produce another picture, and tell another story. Yet, after all this is the limit of any ethnography, or rather, of any human encounter.

Chapter 1
Going for God: the Evangelical Movement in Guinea-Bissau

Sweeping at the nation's gate

At the end of 2012 the AGLOW International - an association of Evangelical women - organized a public ritual cleansing at the airport of Bissau[12]: firstly they prayed, then they washed the place with brooms and mops, and finally they preached to travellers and employees. AGLOW's president Genoveva told me that the airport was a particularly challenging place to evangelize, because many 'bad things' and 'bad ideas' were circulating there:

> We organized all the women, each with her broom: one took a bucket, another took a cloth, and we went there to the airport. […]. And there we started to do this work. We did this in order to reach the souls who work there. [...]. The airport is the gateway of all things. Not only the airport but all the keys, the borders, are open doors because everyone enters. You can come with a good idea, you can come with a negative idea, you see. So [...] we went with our stuff and started cleaning. First we prayed. We prayed and invited the workers who were there to watch our work. [...]. We were there and we cleaned the whole place, we swept, we did everything. Each one was doing the work and praying for everything that may enter.
>
> Bad ideas can come […]. Materials that people enjoy and bring [...]. It is a door. There are people that come with drugs, for example, which is not good. We know this. Sometimes these can be picked up, there at the airport. In this sense we pray too. Anyone who comes here with bad ideas, with bad intentions, bad habits, we can pray for this person, and we can pray for people who are working there.

[12] The international airport Osvaldo Vieira took its name from one of the heroes of the Independence war, cousin of the author of the 1981 coup d'état Nino Vieira.

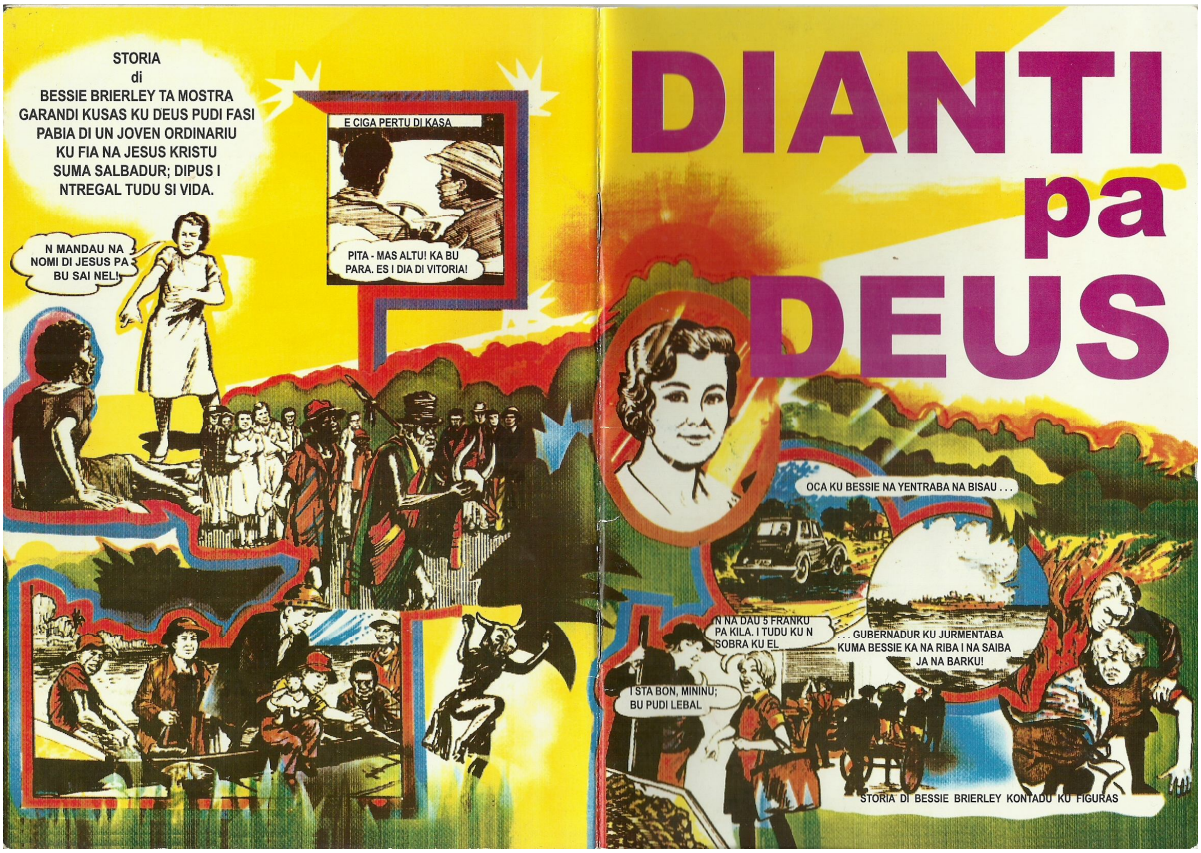
Genoveva's words highlight one of the central issues marking the trajectory of the heterogeneous Evangelical movement in Guinea-Bissau: the dialectic between opening and closing, connecting and disconnecting. Hub of possible global links, gateway to the world, the airport represents risks and opportunities inherent to the openness to the world. If we look at the ambivalence of the term (*mundu* in Kriol) – meaning the global dimension, as well as the mundane sphere in Evangelical language – we see how the airport can be perceived as a liminal place, a transition zone, and as such a privileged object of ritual cleansing. At the same time, this episode brings to light many features of contemporary Evangelical scene: a recent projection into public space, its political engagement, its moralizing thrust towards society, its ability to create and manage transnational networks.

Primarily based on oral history, this chapter describes the trajectory of the Evangelical movement in Guinea-Bissau, against the background of post-independence Guinean history. Especially, I trace the complex changes within the movement back to the crisis of the post-colonial state in Guinea-Bissau. Following the suggestion of Ruth Marshall (2009), I do not set a unidirectional relation of causality between historical processes and religious practices and discourses. Rather, I attempt to illustrate the context of insecurity engendered by the collapse of the state as producing «the conditions of plausibility» for the recent expansion of the movement, as well as it «site of political engagement» (Marhall 2009). Finally, I examine the growth of Evangelical Christianity against the background of a general shift to universal religions, both in urban and in rural areas of the country. In order to interpret the recent transformations of the Evangelical movement, I will propose two possible lines of analysis, one based on the local political field, one directed to global processes.

On 12 April 2012, a coup d'état overturned the democratically elected Guinean government, and installed a provisional administration. On 21 October a group of armed men attacked the barracks of the Para-Commandos, an elite unit of the Guinean army. The assault failed, and the following days Captain Pansau N'Tchama, accused of having directed the action, was arrested and displayed to the media covered with a Portuguese flag. The temporary government considered this event as an attempted counter-coup, instigated by Portugal and former Guinean government to overthrow the transition regime.

I arrived in Bissau on 31 December 2012, just few months after this incident. The main purpose of my trip to the Guinean capital was to reconstruct a genealogy of the

Evangelical movement in Guinea-Bissau through oral history, as literature on the subject was lacking. Furthermore, as many Evangelical Guineans I met in Lisbon were coming from Bissau, I wanted to know their place of origin, as well as the churches which they frequented before their migration to Portugal. I realized 22 interviews with pastors, missionaries and Christian leaders, finding a very warm reception and sharp interest from the Evangelical community. In addition, I visited a few churches in town, where I attended religious services.



1. WEC's pamphlet. Going for God: History of Bessie Brierley

Lus numia na sukuru (the light illuminates the darkness)

Guinea-Bissau is a small Western African country situated on the Upper-Guinean coast, bordered by Senegal to the north and east, and Guinea-Conakry to the east and south. Despite the small dimension of it population, which is of about one and a half million inhabitants, the country is characterized by a great ethnic pluralism, resulting from a series of migration flows and long-distance trades that have crossed its territory over the centuries. Among the former

Portuguese African colonies, Guinea-Bissau has the longest history of anti-colonial resistance. Its independence was unilaterally proclaimed in September 1973, being recognised by Portugal one year later. In post-colonial times, political instability and neoliberal economic policies have led the country to a permanent political and economic crisis. Such factors had an impact on the rise of migration to neighbouring states (such as Senegal and Gambia) and European countries (like France and Portugal) in the last decades. Despite their recent increase, however, these contemporary migrations are part of a long history of population movements across the region and beyond.

Until recent times, Evangelical Christianity was a minority religion in Guinea-Bissau, a country where the majority of the population prevalently practiced Islam, local religions and, to a lesser extent, Catholicism. However, in the last two decades Evangelical churches have experienced a strong increase. In particular, conversions rose rapidly since the 1990s, a crucial period in the history of the movement. Actually, although the first Protestant mission arrived in Portuguese Guinea seventy years ago, it was only in post-colonial times that mission activity began to get results. Today, while remaining a minority, the Evangelical community is gaining an ever more central position in Guinean society, both in religious sphere and in public life.

Compared with the Catholic presence, which goes back to the XVI century and from the outset was closely linked to Portuguese colonization[13], the history of the Protestant minority in Guinea-Bissau is fairly recent. According to collective memory, the origins of the movement date back to 20 May 1940, when the young British missionary Bessie Fricker sailed from Cape Verde to Portuguese Guinea. Few days later she arrived to Bolama, the ancient capital of the Portuguese colony[14].

The 1940 was a crucial year for the Portuguese government's religious policy. With the Concordat, the Missionary Agreement (both assigned in 1940), and the Missionary Statute (assigned in 1941), the Estado Novo committed itself to facilitate the intervention of Catholic missions in overseas territories, subsidizing their social work and limiting the installation of

[13] During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries a series of papal bulls had recognized to the Portuguese Crown the right of patronage over the conquered lands, as well as the mission of evangelizing its inhabitants. However, the actual evangelization of Portuguese Guinea began in 1533, with the creation of the diocese of Cape Verde and Guinea. Nevertheless, only since the eighteenth century Catholic missionary work began to get results and to achieve concrete social actions (Rema 1982; Pélissier 1997; Djaló 2012).

[14] Bolama was the capital of Portuguese Guinea between 1879 and 1941, when the capital was definitely transferred to Bissau.

non-Catholic missions. In exchange, the Holy See accepted that most of the ecclesiastical authorities in the African colonies were Portuguese citizens, and that foreign missionaries were submitted to Portuguese jurisdiction. According to many historians, these agreements did not decree the principle of a confessional state, despite the concession of rights and privileges to the Catholic Church and the establishment of a close collaboration between religious and secular power. On the contrary, it was inspired by the principle of separation between church and state, being ultimately an instrument of regime's propaganda (Carvalho 2013). At the same time, the promotion of the influence of Vatican throughout the Portuguese empire - especially in the fields of family and education – corresponded to the conservative political project of the Estado Novo, expressed by the motto "God, Nation, Family" (Reis 2006).

Due to these circumstances, the early history of the Evangelical minority in Guinea was marked by the distrustful attitude of Portuguese authorities towards Protestant missionaries. Actually, if in 1940 Bessie entered the country without any particular difficulty, in 1943, at the time of her first trip abroad, her visa was revoked. Only in 1946, after Bessie had entered the country illegally, she managed to obtain a title of residence, along with her husband Leslie Brierley - also a Protestant missionary - and their son. Bessie and Leslie were both members of the Worldwide Evangelization Crusade (WEC), an interdenominational Christian organization initially based in England. Eventually, after a period of negotiation with the colonial administration, WEC was authorized to conduct missionary activities under the name of Missão Evangélica. The ups and downs of the relationship between WEC and colonial government can be attributed to the slowness of the implementation of the Missionary Agreement and the subsequent Statute (Reis 2006). According to Ernesto Lima (2007), the turning point in the negotiations between the Portuguese government and WEC have to do with the replacement of the former Governor Ricardo Vaz Monteiro (1941-1945), a Catholic extremist, with more moderate Commander Maria Sarmento Rodrigues (1945-1948). At the same time, the Missão Evangélica was the only Protestant organization officially recognized by the Portuguese administration until Independence, which demonstrates the government's willingness to limit the activities of non-Catholic missions in the region.

In the relatively short trajectory of the Evangelical movement in Guinea-Bissau, oral history recognizes three phases: the foundation (between 1940 and 1974); the institutionalization (between 1974 and 1998); the expansion (from 1998 to the present time).

Foundation

The origins of the Worldwide Evangelization Crusade[15] go back to 1913, when it started as a small group led by Charles Thomas Studd in the Belgian Congo (Davies 2012). Studd was a former British cricket player, of Anglican background but biased by the Methodist doctrine of sanctification or holiness (according to which through the 'second work of grace' it is possible to live a holy life free of sin)[16]. Despite having its origins in the conservative Evangelical stream, WEC was multi-denominational and international, and in order to join the agency every missionary had to set aside his or her own denominational membership. These features led WEC to avoid radical doctrines, such as exclusion of women from ministry or speaking in tongue as evidence of salvation (ibid). In the case of Guinea-Bissau, the earlier WEC missionaries came mostly from Britain and United States and on lesser extent from Germany[17]. Although they had different denominational bonds, most of them were of Baptist background.

In 1970, the Missão Evangélica founded the first Protestant denomination in the country, the 'Igreja Evangélica da Província da Guiné', later renamed 'Igreja Evangélica da Guiné-Bissau' (IEGB)[18]. During this long initial phase, mission was primarily focused on major population centres, and especially on the capital Bissau. The first prayer group met in private houses, in the city centre. As the preaching was initially given in Portuguese, the first converts belonged to the higher and educated class. This congregation evolved into the actual Igreja Central, which until now is the only Portuguese-speaking congregation of IEGB,

[15] The Christian missionary organization founded by Charles Thomas Studd in 1913 was originally called "Heart of Africa Mission" (HAM) or "Christ's etceteras" . The name was changed to "Worldwide Evangelization Crusade" (WEC) in 1919, and eventually renamed 'Worldwide Evangelization for Christ International' (WEC International) in 1982 (Davies 2012).

[16] Studd's vocation had been influenced by the preaching of the American evangelist Dwight Lyman Moody. After working as missionary in China under the China Inland Mission of Hudson Taylor during ten years, he decided to set his own organization, which was initially directed to the evangelization of the African continent.

[17] Today, WEC missionaries working in Guinea-Bissau come from all over the world, the prevailing nationality being Brazil.

[18] Although the legal recognition of the IEGB only occurred in 1970, the 20 May 1940, when Bessie Fricker arrived to Guinea-Bissau, is commonly accepted as its actual date of birth.

including most members belonging to the national elite. Later, Kriol-speaking congregations arose in the suburbs, gathering new converts from lower and illiterate classes. This social heterogeneity has remained a distinctive feature of the movement up to present time.

In 1974 there were five congregations in Bissau, named after the neighbourhoods where they were located: Igreja Central, Igreja de Belém, Igreja de Bandim, Igreja de Antula, Igreja de Missira. In addition, small churches were established in Bolama, Bissorã, Empada, Bijagós islands, Catió, Biombo. In 1950 a leprosy clinic started in Bissorã, directed by an American specialist, Doctor Herbert Billman (Gonçalves 1960; Billman 1951; Lecuona 1966). This health centre was later transferred to the nearby village of Lendene. As well as providing a treatment of leprosy patients, the medical staff carried out community rehabilitation work involving patients, relatives and neighbours. Another clinic was opened in Biombo in 1962, supported by UNICEF, the Portuguese Health Ministry and the Evangelical TEAR Fundation (Lima 2007).

These medical projects had a good reputation with colonial authorities[19], whose attitude towards WEC was in other respects marked by mistrust. As I have already noted, Protestants were disliked due to the close alliance between Portuguese government and Catholic Church. In Portuguese Guinea, the so-called "*ensino indígena*" (indigenous education) was delivered to the Catholic missions (Koudawo 2001), while Protestant missionaries were forbidden to celebrate religious services in public places and to preach in Kriol[20]. In addition, the Portuguese administration distrusted WEC missionaries because of their foreign origin, in a geopolitical context marked by the competition between European powers for the control over the African continent. Indeed, until recent times it has not been easy for a missionary to obtain a visa, except in the case of staff working in social and medical projects[21].

Besides the hostile attitude of the authorities towards Protestant missionaries, the evangelization of rural areas has been hampered by colonial war (1963-1974). In particular,

[19] «Until 1951, the largest contribution to the fight against leprosy in Guinea was due to the Evangelic Mission of Bissorã, which extended its action to Encheia zone, coming to have a private doctor of American nationality, who attended the Tropical Medicine course in Lisbon» (Lecuona 1966).
[20] According to the *Estatuto do Indigenato* (1954), the populations of Portuguese colonies were legally divided into "*civilizados*" (civilized) and "*não-civilizados*" (not civilized). The first category included European and "*assimilados*" of Cape-Verdean or Guinean origins, assimilated to Portuguese citizens; the second comprised the vast majority of the population, whose situation was ruled by the indigenous statute (Djaló 2012).
[21] Source: interview with missionary Hans Friensel.

during the conflict the Portuguese government imposed dramatic limitations on the mobility of the population, especially on the movements between the capital and the countryside.

For all these reasons, in this period the Evangelical community was very slow growing, and soon after Independence the total number of believers was slightly more than one thousand members[22]. Within this small community, the majority belonged to the urban social layers, some being 'assimilated'[23] or part of the Cape-Verdean elite. The remainders lived in the areas reached by the first fragmented missionary activity in the countryside. Among peasants, most belonged to the Balanta ethnic group (from Bissorã and Catió regions), and some were part of Bijagó and Papel communities (respectively from Bijagó islands and Biombo region).

The work of Bible translation into local languages started in this period and continued to the present. As a result, the Bible was published in Kriol in 1998; the New Testament was published in Bijagó in 1989, in Papel in 1994, in Balanta in 2012.

The liberation war was a defining period for the early history of the movement. The marginality and small size of the newborn evangelical minority prevented it from playing a central role in colonial war, unlike what happened in Mozambique and Angola (Silva 2001; Silva 2004; Schubert 1999; Ngoenha 1999; Paredes 2010). The earlier establishment of the Presbyterian and Methodist churches in Mozambique, as well as the Congregational and Methodist churches in Angola, enabled these denominations to take part in the formation of nationalist elites, which eventually joined the anti-colonial struggle. Significantly, a relatively high number of nationalist militants in Mozambique and Angola were Protestant or had studied in Protestant schools, although Evangelical churches never declared to sustain directly the liberation struggle (Schubert 1999; Silva 2001; Paredes 2010). As a result, in Mozambique and Angola Protestant churches became a target of persecution since the 1960s, as Portuguese authorities suspected them to keep covert connections with liberation movements (Silva 2001; Silva 2004; Paredes 2010)[24]. In the early 1970s, the public

[22] Source: IEGB.
[23] See note 9.
[24] In Mozambique, this situation reached its peak in 1972, when PIDE (the political Portuguese police) detained large numbers of Protestant believers, and murdered in jail two Presbyterian leaders.

positioning of the World Council of Churches[25] in favour of liberation movements strengthened Portugal's suspicion that Protestant missions were centres of anti-colonial resistance.

By contrast, in Portuguese Guinea an autochthonous Evangelical leadership had not yet appeared, and the movement was not influential enough to constitute a counter-power wherein an anti-colonial consciousness could emerge. Nevertheless, this marginality did not prevent some believers from playing significant parts in the liberation war, including Luís Cabral himself, who belonged to the Nazarene Church in his youth. The most famous case is that of Rafael Barbosa, one of the leaders of PAIGC, who recruited young people for the guerrilla through church networks. Rafael Barbosa was a controversial figure, who spent nine years in jail under colonial rule, and fourteen years during the PAIGC administration[26]. Here is how his daughter, Helena Barbosa, describes the mixture of political consciousness and religious faith throughout his life:

> My father […] joined the party very early, he was co-founder of PAIGC, [...] he was one of the popular figures of the liberation struggle, he did all his work here in Bissau, and he was jailed nine years in the colonial era and fourteen in PAIGC era. [...] But before the emergence of PAIGC, my father was already doing resistance; he already belonged to some groups: MLG, FLING, [...]. He always did resistance, but never separated from the Bible, by the time of his death. [...] He never let go off the Bible, he told me that his worst experience was when his Bible was taken away, in one of the periods of his captivity.

Likewise in Mozambique and Angola, also in Portuguese Guinea the real or supposed sympathy of the Evangelical community for the liberation front caused the repressive reaction of the colonial government. As a result, in 1963 at least four Evangelical believers were jailed and murdered by PIDE. The evangelist Formoso Mendes was tortured and executed in Cantchungo prison, his corpse being carried in a wagon and shown to the villagers. The elder Dinis Gomes Barbosa was assassinated and burned in his house by a Portuguese commando

[25] An ecumenical organization founded in 1948 and based in Geneva, including most Protestant as well as Orthodox churches, but not the Roman Catholic Church.

[26] Barbosa was accused of betrayal by PAIGC for having read a public act of apology to the Portuguese Government, while he was a prisoner during the Independence war.

in Cubisseco. Vitor Vaz Martins and Pedro Silva, leaders of the Empada Church, were tortured and brutally murdered in Empada, together with other believers of the local congregation (Lima 2007). In addiction, the Evangelical clinic in Lendene was closed, as the medical staff was accused of helping the guerrilla.

Institutionalization

The end of colonialism favoured the gradual expansion of the Evangelical minority in Guinea-Bissau in several ways. Firstly, after Independence it became easier to travel around the country, which gradually promoted the evangelization of rural areas. Secondly, the national constitution formally declared religious freedom in a secular state. The new government, despite its Marxist inspiration, was fairly friendly with the Protestant community, whereas it was hostile to the Catholic Church for its former collusion with the Portuguese administration. In 1976, the Missão Evangélica was invited to lead a program on the national radio. Moreover, thanks to the credibility enjoyed by Pastor Ernesto Lima, an eminent church leader and customs officer, some believers were integrated in the Ministry of Finance. Thirdly, in the 1980s IEGB began a process of emancipation from WEC, through the development of a national leadership. Gradually, the local bases of the church became stronger and better organized. In 1978 Pastor Ernesto Lima became the first Guinean president of the National Council, the highest IEGB organism. By 1990 foreign missionaries had left any charge in the church, and IEGB had become financially independent. In 1991 IEGB was the first denomination officially recognized by the postcolonial government. Finally, in the early 1990s, constitutional rearrangements included in multi-party transition opened the doors of the country to new international denominations, which gave new impetus to evangelization.

The key event that marked this phase was the process of economic and political liberalization, required by the international donors in exchange for their financial aid. Between 1991 and 1995, a series of constitutional amendments sanctioned basic citizenship rights: besides the freedom of press, of trade union and of association, religious freedom was also reinforced. Although the Constitution of 1973 formally safeguarded the right to practice

any religion[27], religious organizations were not legally recognized in practice. By contrast, the revised Constitution regulated the relations between state and religious entities in a more precise way: firstly, it declared the separation between secular state and religious institutions, and the protection of legally recognized confessions (art. 6). Secondly, the freedom of worship was affirmed, as well as the right to teach any religion (art. 52)[28].

One of the effects of this process was the multiplication worship places and Evangelical denominations, both of national and foreign origin[29]. If until that moment the Missão Evangélica was the only Protestant organization recognized by the authorities (although not formally), from now on new foreign churches were allowed to establish congregations in the country. Hence, in the 1990s a large number of denominations from Brazil, and to a lesser extent from the United States, Nigeria and Ghana, began to set up in Guinea-Bissau. After IEGB, the first Christian organizations to be legalized were JOCUM (Jovens Com Uma Missão, the Brazilian branch of YWAM), the Assemblies of God, the Nigerian Deeper Life Church, some local churches of Pentecostal inspiration (such as the Igreja Ide and the MAFI, Ministério de Amor pela Fé Internacional), as well as the Adventist Church. Among the recently established denominations, there is the Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus (IURD) and the Deus é Amor from Brazil, the Redeemed Church and the Winners' Chapel from Nigeria, as well as the Lighthouse Chapel from Ghana. By large, since this moment the most part of foreign missionaries circulating in Guinea-Bissau have been of Brazilian origin.

It was in this decade that a generation of church leaders started to leave Guinea-Bissau to get a theological training abroad, mostly in Brazil and African countries, but also in England and Portugal. More generally, the arrival of these new churches and the creation of

[27] Art. 17: "A liberdade de expressão do pensamento, de reunião, de associação e de manifestação é garantida nas condições previstas na Lei, assim como a liberdade de praticar uma religião" (Constituição de 24 de Setembro de 1973).

[28] Art.1: "A Guiné-Bissau é uma República soberana, democrática, laica e unitária". Art.6°: "Na República da Guiné-Bissau existe separação entre o Estado e as instituições religiosas. O Estado respeita e protege confissões religiosas reconhecidas legalmente. A actividade dessas confissões e o exercício do culto sujeitam-se à lei". Art.52: "A liberdade de consciência e de religião é inviolável. A todos é reconhecida a liberdade de culto, que em caso algum poderá violar os princípios Fundamentais consagrados na Constituição. É garantida a liberdade de ensino de qualquer religião praticada no âmbito da respectiva confissão" (Constituição Da República, 1996).

[29] The same dynamic occurred within the Islamic field: most large mosques of Bissau were built between 1986 and 1991, during the process of economic and political liberalization, with funds from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Libya. As well, Islamic associations proliferated in the same period (Gaillard 2002).

transnational religious networks enhanced the global mobility of young believers, principally through the allocation of international scholarships.

Expansion

This opening to the outside was interrupted by the outbreak of civil war in 1998. Despite having produced a temporary pause in the expansion of the Evangelical minority, the conflict fostered the growth of the movement in the following years in various ways. On the one hand, the concentration of hostilities in the area of Bissau has caused an exodus from the capital, pushing Evangelical believers into the countryside, and favouring the evangelization of rural areas that had not yet been reached by the Gospel. Pastor Dionísio Rodrigues, an IEGB minister, interpreted this event as a replication of the Acts of the Apostles:

> What happened here, with the 7 June war? People could not stay in Bissau any more, bombs were falling. Did you read the story of the book of Acts? What happened to the early church? Everyone wanted to stay in Jerusalem, isn't it? But persecution came, and caused people to disperse. The same thing happened here: with the 7 June war everybody went inland. Some people remained here, I also stayed here in Bissau, but most people went inside. They went to villages where there were no churches, and started preaching. Hence, from that time forth, the Igreja Evangélica grew really. Then, because of the bombs they got here, many brothers no longer wanted to come back, because they had planted churches and stayed to take care of the churches there in the villages: it happened in the South, East, and North. Where you had family, you went there as a refugee and you planted the church soon!

On the other hand, during the war the Protestant leadership acquired an important public role, participating in mediation meetings and helping to distribute international aid to the population. In particular IEGB, through its representative Pastor Ernesto Lima, participated to the works of the Comissão de Mediação de Boa Vontade (Good Will Mediation Commission) formed by civil society actors and aimed at the reconciliation between the parties in conflict. After the death of the catholic Bishop Settimio Arturo Ferrazzetta, on 26 January 1999, the presidency of the commission was assumed by Pastor Ernesto Lima himself (Lima 2007).

Throughout the duration of the conflict, the World Food Programme, the International Red Cross, the Catholic and Evangelical churches[30] and other NGO cooperated in the distribution of food and international aid. The operations were coordinated by the Guinean Health Ministry Brandão Gomes Co, an Evangelical believer according to oral history[31]. It was probably due to his religious affiliation that Evangelical churches acquired a leading position within the aid organization.

Evangelical community's commitment was not limited to the social and humanitarian field: its action in favour of peace was practiced on a spiritual dimension as well. On October 1998, on the national radio the President's faction announced an ultimatum, threatening to raze Bissau. By that time, a group of believers from IEGB was preaching through radio programs, both on the national radio and on the radio directed by the Junta Militar. After receiving the news of the ultimatum, this group decided to launch an appeal for a prayer and fast day, to ask for the mercy of God and avert the imminent danger. The message was directed to all Guinean Christians, regardless of their specific confession. In the account of Ernesto Lima (Lima 2007), not only the initiative was embraced by Evangelical congregations, but many Christians joined the call as well, both Protestant and Catholic. At the end of the day, the radio announced that the ultimatum was withdrawn. According to Ernesto Lima, a spiritual battle had been gained:

> Many people continued steady on prayer and calling upon God, not only for them, but for all the people of the country. It was a real spiritual battle, as the apostle Paul said in Ephesians 6:10-18.
>
> The answer was not long in coming, thank God. […] Prayer and fasting continued all day. At 5 p.m. of the same day, the belligerent who had launched the ultimatum sent another statement on the national radio saying that everything had been suspended and the capital would not be bombed! As they left the church at the end of prayer, one of the Government Ministers came to meet them, saying: "Yesterday I heard on the radio your call for prayer directed to all Christians. It was good because your prayers have been answered: the ultimatum was finally removed short time ago!". […] We learned later that our call led many Christians, not only Evangelical, to pray that day (Lima 2007:138–139).

[30] Among the Evangelical churches present in the country at that time, IEGB had a leading role in the operations, through his representative Ernesto Lima. Nonetheless, the entire Evangelical network was involved in the humanitarian work.
[31] Personal source.

Ernesto Lima's account highlights the practical dimension of prayer, and shows how political and spiritual fields are frequently interlaced in religious practice. As Ruth Marshal points out with reference to Nigerian Pentecostalism, prayer is often conceived as "an action on the world", in "a universe where words and things have agency" (Marshall 2009:4). At the same time, this episode illustrates the increasing influence of the Evangelical minority in Guinean society.

In the last decade, the Evangelical movement has been able to capitalize on the public role it gained during the civil war. Today, despite remaining a minority, Evangelical churches are becoming more and more active in society, and visible on public arena, also through new denominations that are now easily entering the country, mainly of Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal inspiration.

The downside of this rapid growth is the risk of internal divisions. Today, Evangelical churches have to compete not only with external rivals, such as Muslim communities and Catholic Church, but also with internal contenders. Currently, one of the main challenges of the movement is to build a unity between old and new denominations, national and foreign churches, conservative, Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal models.

In order to coordinate their actions, represent the Evangelical Community, safeguard its rights against the authorities and establish connections with Evangelical Associations from other countries, a group of Evangelical churches founded the Aliança Evangélica Guineense (AEG), whose legal personality was recognized in 2000. The founding members were: IEGB, Igreja Evangélica da Assembleia de Deus, WEC International; Igreja Evangélica Missionária Kairós and Junta de Missões Mundiais (Baptist Church). At first, the initiative came from IEGB, the first president being Ernesto Lima. However, misunderstanding and internal power struggles pressed IEGB to exit from the institution. At the same time, other denominations joined the alliance[32]. Today, the outcome of these divisions is a diarchy between Aliança Evangélica and IEGB National Council, with authorities and foreign Evangelical associations being confused about the effective institutional representative of the Guinean Evangelical community.

[32] With the exclusion of the Brazilian IURD and Deus é Amor, considered too distant from Evangelical principles. In particular, these denominations are criticized for their attitude of closure towards the other churches, for their insistence on the controversial doctrine of prosperity and for the use of ritual objects during worship.

Hence, all attempts to build an alliance joining all denominations failed so far. Nonetheless, according to a commonly shared view the ability of the movement to solve its internal conflicts is the premise for its development in the future.

As I have shown, in the last 70 years the Evangelical Guinean community evolved from a marginal minority to a growing force in the country, able to compete with Islam and Catholicism in the battle for the hoarding of Guinean souls. If the post-colonial crisis of government in Guinea-Bissau do not explain thoroughly this upward flight, nonetheless it constitute its «context of plausibility» (Marshall 2009), as part of the historical conditions in which the Evangelical movement emerged and developed.

The crisis of the post-colonial state in Guinea-Bissau

On 1 January 2013, on the national TV Pastor Júlio Joaquim, president of the Aliança Evangélica da Guiné-Bissau was giving a New Year's message to the nation. He was wishing a good 2013, but his expression was serious and his voice had a severe tone. He spoke about the current situation of the country, marked by political instability and economic hardship. According to him, Guinean people should not trust politicians or other people. Indeed, none but the Lord could bring prosperity and peace to Guinea-Bissau. I was impressed by the fact that the editorial staff had committed this message to a representative of a religious minority. However, later I learned that the national TV frequently invites the representatives of the three main religions (Islam, Catholicism and Protestantism), but Evangelicals are the most receptive to the calls of the media.

Pastor Julio Joaquim was referring to the crisis of government in which Guinea-Bissau was sunk since the coup d'état of April 12. Nonetheless, political and economic insecurity was not a novelty for the country. On the contrary, changes of power by force have been a constant since independence. In the post-colonial era, Guinea-Bissau has collected three coups (in 1980, 2003 and 2012) and a civil war (1998-99), plus several unsuccessful attempts to seize power by force, regularly followed by political murders and human rights violations. Political crisis and economical decline have been constant throughout the history of the Republic, and no democratically elected president completed his term. Indeed, what Guinea-Bissau is currently facing is less a state of crisis than a state of "enduring instability" (Vigh 2010).

Political violence in Guinea-Bissau has its roots in colonial era and liberation war. Compared with other African countries, the process of decolonization of Portuguese Africa was particularly marked by bloodshed, and Portuguese African colonies had to fight more than a decade of wars before achieving Independence. In Guinea-Bissau, the liberation struggle (1963-1974) brought the local population to fight on opposite fronts, as the Portuguese colonial rule recruited a large number of native soldiers, mostly in the lower ranks of its army[33]. As a consequence, towards the end of the war most of the fighting on the battlefield was between the African units of the Portuguese army and the anti-colonial guerrilla (Djaló 2012). The nationalist front was led by PAIGC (Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde)[34] and its armed wing, the FARP (Forças Armadas Revolucionárias do Povo). PAIGC's leader Amílcar Cabral belonged to the Cape Verdean minority, an elite which exercised administrative and commercial activities in colonial Guinea. While the party leadership of Cape Verdean origin was installed in Conakry (the capital of the former French Guinea), the bulk of the anti-colonial army that fought on the battlefield was formed by native Guineans, most belonging to the Balanta ethnic group.

On 20 January 1973 the national hero Amílcar Cabral was assassinated in Conakry under unclear circumstances. After Independence, his brother Luís Cabral became the first President of Guinea-Bissau Republic. In this period several PAIGC's commanders died in suspicious circumstances, perhaps in reprisal for their suspected involvement in Amílcar Cabral's assassination. According to a widely accepted interpretation, the main reason for this bloodshed would have been the power struggle between the two factions of PAIGC, the intellectual direction of Cape Verdean origin and the Guinean military command. In addition, many executions occurred against former soldiers who had fought in the colonial troops.

The post-colonial state was built according to the Soviet model, based on a single party system, the centralization of administration and political power, and the monopoly of

[33] According to Tcherno Djaló, in 1974 Portugal relied on 17.000 to 25.000 African soldiers in Guinea, corresponding to 35% to 60% of the colonial army, against 33.000 Portuguese soldiers (Djaló 2012). The African units within the Portuguese colonial army were structured in three divisions: the 'comandos africanos' (voluntary elite unities), the navy detachments and the 'caçadores africanos', the latter being recruited on an ethnic base and submitted to the European command. According to Al Venter (1973, cited by Djaló 2012) the majority of African soldiers were drafted among Fula people. Nonetheless, also other groups were included, such as Mandjaco, Papel, Bijagó and Balanta (Djaló 2012).

[34] The aim of PAIGC was the liberation and subsequent political union of the two Portuguese colonies of Guinea and Cape Verde.

the state on the country's economy. Under the leadership of Luís Cabral, the Cape Verdean minority maintained both the direction of PAIGC and the government of the state. The nationalization of commercial enterprises and the promotion of small industry were supported by international cooperation, both from Western Europe and the Soviet block. However, this economic policy proved a failure, as it favoured industrial investment and the public sector while neglecting agriculture, in which most of the population was involved. At the same time, agricultural production was in the hands of rural communities, and rural marketing channels remained anchored to an informal economy, outside the domain of state agencies. As a result, the fiscal basis of state remained quite limited, and the government was unable to implement macro-level policies on a national basis (Forrest 2003).

On 14 November 1980 a coup d'état led by João Bernardo Vieira (Nino), one of the chief military leaders of the Liberation war, overturned the balance of power within the party and resigned the Cape Verdean direction. The new scheme was based on the charismatic figure of President Nino Vieira, who held power from 1980 to 1999. Throughout this period, the party organisation gave way to the personal power of the president in the government of the country, a trend that was defined by Raul Fernandes Mendes as the affirmation of a «presidential bonapartism» (Fernandes 1994). Nino's supremacy was asserted by recurrent purges within PAIGC. Initially, Nino Vieira was supported by the military base, formed by soldiers who had fought in the Liberation war, mostly from the Balanta ethnic group. However, this alliance was broken after the political crisis of 1985-86, in which Paulo Correia (Vice-President of the Council of the Revolution) and six other officers of Balanta origin were accused of attempted coup, and later executed. The regime became increasingly repressive, and Nino used more and more violence to control his opponents. There were rumours of alleged human sacrifice and witchcraft rituals that the President would have committed to keep the power.

From an economic standpoint, initially Vieira's regime remained in continuity with the model of state centralization, monopoly economy, support to industry and public sector and dependence on foreign aid. In the mid-1980s, however, the president was pressed to start a process of economic privatization, due to a worsening of financial crisis and the loss of the support from the Soviet bloc, whose countries had sustained Guinea-Bissau immediately after independence. In 1986 it was adopted a structural adjustment program, negotiated with the

International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Economic liberalization preceded political liberalization, also required by international donors. The transition to democracy began in 1991 and was completed in 1995. Throughout this period a series of constitutional rearrangements occurred, entailing the separation of powers, the multiparty system, the direct election of the President of the Republic, as well as the recognition of fundamental citizenship rights.

As noted by de Miguel de Barros (2012), the transition to a multi-party system did not remained confined to the political sphere. On the contrary, the constitutional changes produced important advancements in the freedom of trade unions, press and association. This process resulted in the affirmation and recognition of collective social agents alternative to political parties, contributing to the construction of a new civil society. Since this moment, actors like churches, trade unions, NGO, media, associations, started to play a role in the social, political, religious and economic pluralisation of Guinean society. In particular, the role of some sectors of the civil society in the promotion of peace and social justice became more evident during the civil war of 1998-99.

The first parliamentary and presidential elections were held on 3 July 1994, and were won respectively by PAIGC and Nino Vieira. Hence, despite juridical amendments, the power remained firmly in the hands of Nino and PAIGC. However, the economic crisis was getting worse, as the adjustment program did not achieve the expected results. On the contrary, the measures produced a steep increase in inflation and foreign debt[35], while the adoption in 1997 of the CFA franc[36] caused a further increase in the cost of living. The public officials were the category most affected by the financial crisis, experiencing back pay and loss of power of their wages. In general, the crisis headed for a rapid process of impoverishment of the urban classes, and produced an increasing popular disaffection with government.

The discontent within the armed forces and the suspension of the army Chief Ansumane Mané with accusations of weapons trafficking, led to a military insurrection on 7 July 1998. The rebellion quickly became a civil war, with the majority of the army, as well as many veterans of the anti-colonialist war, joining Mané's supporters. Relying only on his close followers and a small number of militaries, Nino was forced to seek help from his foreign allies: troops from Senegal and Guinea-Conakry arrived in Bissau to sustain the

[35] In the 1990s, the national debt remained 4 times greater than GDP (Forrest 2003).
[36] The currency used in the neighbouring countries

president faction. Throughout the conflict the rebels received strong and growing popular support, as the intervention of foreign contingents was viewed by ordinary Guineans as an occupation force. Interrupted by multiple cease-fires, the conflict ended in 1999 with the removal of Nino.

On 28 November 1999, new elections brought to power Koumba Yala, a former philosophy professor of Balanta origin, and his party, the PRS (Partido da Renovação Social). The campaign was marked by the search for an ethnic and religious electorate. According to international and national observers, Koumba Yala's presidency was characterized by inability to govern and degradation of the political climate. The opposition complained of arbitrary government action, restrictions on freedom of expression and police violence. The economic situation was worsening, with the suspension of civil service salaries and a general increase in poverty. Some observers defined the Koumba Yala's mandate as a 'dictatorship of incompetents' (Rosa Mendes 2001). Others spoke of a 'balantization of power' (Costa Dias 2002), in which the state was ruled according to a predatory and nepotistic logic (Silva 2010).

On 14 September 2003 General Veríssimo Seabra, Chief of the Armed Forces, put an end to the mandate of Koumba Yala. New elections were held in 2004 and 2005, resulting in the victory of PAIGC and the re-election of Nino Vieira.

Nino's last mandate was marked by the expansion of drug trafficking in Guinea-Bissau. This phenomenon was intensified by the attack of the Twin Towers in 2001, which pushed the United States to strengthen the control over its borders, obliging drug trafficking to change its routes. As a result, in the first decade of 2000 the country has gradually turned into a transit point for narcotics travelling from South America to Europe. In 2007 the Minister of Justice, Carmelita Pires, presented a list of Guinean politician, militaries and policemen who were allegedly involved in illegal activities. Since 2005, the international press began to regard the Republic of Guinea-Bissau as a narco-state (Silva 2010).

Nino's rule ended on 2 March 2009, with the brutal assassination of the national hero. The day before the general Tagmé NaWaie, Chief of the Armed Forces, was killed by the explosion of a bomb. In retaliation, a group of dissident soldiers murdered Nino Vieira in his home, in the center of Bissau. According to popular memory, he screamed for hours while his body was torn to pieces.

On 26 July 2009 Malam Bacai Sanha, supported by PAIGC, was elected President of the Republic. During his mandate, cocaine trafficking seemed to have diminished and political institutions gave the impression of working. However, his death by disease on 9 January 2011 left a further power vacuum. New presidential elections were held, with the candidacy of Carlos Gomes Junior, the former Prime Minister supported by PAIGC, and Kumba Yala. On 12 April 2012, on the eve of the 2nd round of vote, a new military coup occurred. In the following days the military Junta and the major parties nominated Manuel Serifo Nhamadjo as interim President of the Republic. The provisional government, now in command, should manage the transition process until new elections, to be held in November 2013. Meanwhile, the drug trafficking is prospering, involving sectors of the political society and the army[37].

To describe the collapse of the post-colonial state in Guinea-Bissau, Joshua Forrest recurred to the concept of 'fragile state' (Forrest 2003). According to the author, the key elements of state weakness in contemporary Guinea-Bissau would be a widening gap between state and rural civil society, political instability, cyclical warfare and economic disorder (Forrest 2003). Starting from a concept of civil society as a non-state sphere of political and social organizations, including urban-based institutions and rural-based social formations, Forrest links the origins of state fragility to the historical evolution of an indigenous rural civil-society in pre-colonial and colonial eras. Over the course of many centuries, Guinean rural-based civil society would have acquired a substantial degree of local autonomy, building up alternative spheres of socio-political authority and economic activity, and constituting an enduring impediment to state building. Whereas the colonial regime proved unable to achieve effective incorporation of the rural populace into the state sphere, this social counter-power was able to resist the central power all along Portuguese occupation. Confronted to a strong rural civil society, the Portuguese state reverted to using massive violence against defenceless civilians, in an effort to terrorize the peasant population into submission. Especially, policies of state terror were deployed during the 1913-15 campaigns of 'pacification' and the 1962-74

[37] At the beginning of April 2013, U.S. anti-narcotics officers arrested the Guinean navy chief Admiral Bubo Na Tchuto in international waters near Cape Verde. Na Tchuto, who has been involved in several failed coups in the country (the last one in December 2011), was designated as drug kingpins by the U.S. government in 2010, suspected of involvement in cocaine smuggling from South America (Source: Reuters).

war against the movement for national liberation, generating in both cases a fierce interethnic mobilization among rural groups.

Soon after Independence, it became clear that the post-colonial state could not easily overcome the legacy of the colonial period, proving unable to establish its hegemony on rural areas and to implement social policies at a regional level. Especially, the gap between state and rural civil society was reinforced by the expansion of the informal sector of the economy, weakening the fiscal basis of the state. As the state's bureaucratic staff functioned on a relatively narrow base of power, through the post-colonial period it became ever more isolated and 'inward' oriented (Forrest 2003:222). According to Forrest, the institutional crisis of the Guinean post-colonial state would be the outcome of the national leadership's isolation. As well, all the features of the post-independence state could be explained within this framework: the factionalism among state leaders, the unrealistic plans toward industrial growth, the high public expenditure during the 1980s, the incompetence of high-level officials, and above all the extensive and growing corruption throughout the state apparatus. Likewise its colonial predecessor, as the political, social and economic isolation of the state grew more acute, the post-colonial state recurred to state violence to enforce the central authority. According to Forrest the series of coup d'état, attempted coup, and purported coups, and the rise in the level of political violence would reflect "the extreme isolation and paranoia of the national government" (Forrest 2003:229). Eventually, the state-provoked conflicts would have resulted in the civil war of 1998-99.

From my point of view, the binary opposition between central state and civil society is not sufficient to explain the complex political field and the heterogeneity of power in contemporary Guinea-Bissau. To describe the particular forms that the state takes here, as well as in other African countries, it can be helpful to integrate Forrest's view with the work of François Bayart. According to Bayart's perspective, expressed in notions such as "*la politique du ventre*", "rhizome state" (Bayart 1989) and "criminalization of the state" (Bayart, Ellis, and Hibou 1999), the state in Africa is neither weak nor failed. Far from judging the African state against an ideal type shaped on the West-European political system, the author invites to consider the singularity of its historical trajectory (Bayart 1989). The state in Africa would not be characterized by its inability to organize societies: on the contrary, it would be firmly rooted in its social fundaments. Likewise a rhizome or a tangled underground root

system, it would be an ensemble "of networks that connect its underground stems with scattered points of the society" (Bayart 1989:272). In order to understand this organism, rather than examine its visible and institutional parts, we should focus on "its adventitious roots, to analyse the bulbs and tubers which it feeds in secret and from which it extracts his vitality" (Bayart 1989:272). Through its networks, the central power would incorporate both the élites and the subordinate social groups according to a patronage mode. This view casts light on the precariousness of national politics, as well as on systems of inequality south of the Sahara. On the one hand, political instability would be the result of factional struggle, up to the establishment of the presidential network against its concurrent factions. On the other hand, this complex mode of government would have enabled African elites to accumulate their countries' wealth through tenure of political power. It is what Bayart calls «*politique du ventre*» (literally 'politics of the belly'): alternatively recurring to assimilation of the élites and physical elimination of their rivals, many African presidents would have gradually acquired the most part of national resources. Especially, in continuity with pre-colonial and colonial eras, in the African continent wealth would be mainly accumulated through strategies of extraversion and control of international relations, in a context of economic dependence[38] (ibid.).

According to Bayart, Ellis and Hibou (1999), today new forms of *politique du ventre* are emerging, adapted to an international context increasingly marked by globalization of trade, deregulation of markets and development of transnational relations. These conditions would have created new opportunities for international criminal organizations operating in Africa, as well as new possibilities of economic accumulation, resulting in novel forms of state's criminalization.

If access to the state was a source of private benefit since the colonial period, today the erosion of government have led further, under the combined effect of economic crisis, institutional collapse, and programmes of structural adjustment. In particular, liberalization measures have reinforced the tendency towards the appropriation of economic resources by African elites, including through illicit activities (such as drug trafficking and other forms of illegal trade, tax evasion, bribery, and so on). The development of this connection between

[38] At the same time, coherently with the multiple meaning of the 'belly' themes south of the Sahara, the notion refers to family lineage, witchcraft, exploitation of people (Bayart 1989).

political class and illegal trade (frequently maintained through sons and daughters of those in power) has two important consequences: from the one side, the emergence of a parallel government in conjunction with the official one. Whereas the latter would be a façade to be displayed to donor countries, the first would constitute the actual political structure, where patrimonial and illegal networks would be associated. From the other side, these processes would amplify the fragmentation of power south of the Sahara, as "everyone tries to build his or her own sphere of power, however large or small (Bayart, Ellis, and Hibou 1999:97).

Hence, while many African states seem to have lost the capacity to execute any form of policy, their place has been taken by other social actors, such as churches and other religious institutions, NGO and military organizations. In particular, the proliferation of religious movements in contemporary Africa resulted in the creation of non-state zones, able to produce alternative forms of social solidarity. If they demonstrate the incompleteness of state government over society, generally these communities do not have as their objective the subversion of the state. On the contrary, they operate in cohabitation with the rhizome state, creating their own networks (Bayart 1989). At the same time, religious agents have been frequently object of cooptation into the state apparatus, especially through parties and other public institutions, in social contexts marked by small population size and low schooling, where social élites are quite reduced. Likewise other mechanisms of élites' assimilation taking place in many African post-colonial states, the integration of religious actors by those in power has the double aim to use them as intermediaries with the «deep country», and simultaneously to control potential sources of social dissidence (ibid.). However, as domination is always incomplete, state actors are faced with the counter-strategies of their interlocutors, as in the case of the relationship between state and Evangelical movement in Guinea-Bissau, as I will show.

The Evangelical minority from separation to participation

According to official statistical data, in 1979 35% of the Guinean population was Muslim, 60% practiced indigenous religions and 5% was Christian (Machado 2002). The 2009 census showed an enormous growth of Christianity (now at 22%), an increase in Islam (45%) and a decline in local religions (15%)[39]. If these data should be treated with caution (as 16% of the

[39] Source: Instituto Nacional de Estatística e Censos, Bissau.

population did not answer to the question about practiced religion)[40], the rising of Christianity is undeniable, as well as the continuous progress of Islam, at the expense of indigenous religions. According with religious leaders of both sides, the Catholic Church and the Protestant block are equally experiencing a strong expansion throughout the country, although specific numbers are not available.

The rise of Evangelical Christianity is even more striking if confronted with the exiguity of Protestant minority until Independence. José Julio Gonçalves (1960) points out how in 1950 Protestants formed a statistically insignificant community, with 2.2% among civilized and 0,008% among not-civilized population[41]. Besides these remarks, the only quantitative inquiry on Evangelical community's dimension was realized by the Dutch missionary Hans Friensel in 1990, counting 9,000 believers within IEGB. An idea of the growth of IEGB from its origins to the present day can only be based on estimates. According to IEGB leaders, the total number of members was approximately 2,000 in 1974, rising to 9,000 in 1990, 12.000 in 2000, 30-40,000 in 2012. Data on other denominations are not available.

Catholics and Protestants agree in identifying Islam as the main competitor for the colonization of public space, turned into a spiritual battlefield between different confessions. Mosques and Pentecostal churches are especially involved in catching the attention of citizens' eyes and ears, by means of graffiti, loudspeakers and conversion campaigns. In Bissau's neighbourhoods, Muslim dawn prayer and Evangelical worship vigils are among the major sources of quarrels. However, the level of religious conflict has never reached an alarming dimension, and intercourse between people of different faith seems to be quite friendly.

If the recent advancement of Evangelical Christianity in Guinean religious landscape can be taken for granted, how could it be understood? Far from having a concluding answer to this question, I suggest two possible lines of interpretation, one focused on the local political context, one directed to the global scene.

Bissau is a hiccupping city, living to the rhythm of its continuous blackouts. The distribution of water and electricity is intermittent, the roads are all in disrepair, and social

[40] In addition, Béatrice Hibou warns about the unreliability (and in certain cases the falsification) of most African statistics (Hibou 1999).
[41] Sources cited by Gonçalves: map 1 in Morgado 1959; Mota 1954.

services are almost absent, including health and public school. Despite violence and instability in the political scene, during my stay in Bissau I did not feel a climate of tension at the level of everyday life. Rather, what caught my attention was the absence of the state in people's lives. People regarded state structures as increasingly deficient, especially in rural areas, and believed most civilian and military officials to be involved in illegal businesses and illicit appropriation of public resources. All saw Guinea-Bissau as a plundered country, abandoned by its corrupted rulers. Nonetheless, the most common reaction to this situation was a critical resignation. A recurring phrase in conversations was "*djitu ka ten*": we have to accept things as they are, because there is no way to change them (Bordonaro 2009). In the face of poverty, violence, despair and collapse of the state, religious organizations are among the few institutions which provide solutions of hope, support, solidarity and reconstruction of social networks.

At a first level of analysis, the expansion of the Evangelical minority in the last decades can be interpreted as a response to the collapse of the Guinean state, more than ever marked by political instability, corruption and financial bankruptcy. In particular, the recent growth of the movement can be viewed in the light of its evolution from a relatively segregated community, focused on the separation from the world, to an open movement, actively operating on public space, both in religious sphere and in socio-political fields.

The marginality of the earlier community was linked to various factors. From the one hand, the first Protestant missionaries were isolated and discriminated by the Portuguese colonial state, due to their foreign origin and there rivalry with Catholic Church. From the other hand, their morally conservative background predisposed them to a focus on spiritual retreat, rigid moral conduct and holy life. In their view, in order to break free from sin, the believer should have made a rupture not only from ancestral rituals, but also from the risks inherent in political life. By contrast, in recent years the dominant focus has been on social activity and participation in public life. Here is how Elizabeth Fernandes, an Evangelical youth's leader, illustrate the IEGB's "coming out":

> In the past the Igreja Evangélica was only within the church, they separated so much: I belong to the church; I am not from the world, so I stay in the church and not in the world. Now we are much more opened to make a difference in the world, to be the

> light of the world. Not doing things that the world does, but trying to bring the Word. Now I see that the Igreja Evangélica has been more opened, but before you saw pastors who were only pastors, or missionaries who were only missionaries, they did not have other training. Today you see a pastor who is a lawyer, such as Pastor Zé Paulo, you see a pastor who is a public officer, such as Pastor Alfredo, you see a pastor who is a doctor or a diplomat [...]. Hence they are pastors who have their current jobs, but are also leading their churches. The pastor is not only a pastor, he has his own job, he is not a pastor to sustain his family. Thus many things have been done. I think that someway the Igreja Evangélica has engaged in Guinean social life more than it did at the time of Pastor Amaro and Pastor Ernesto. […] Because if you stay in the church who will you influence? If Christ had come to preach in the church, he would have stayed inside the tabernacle, isn't it? But no, He went and preached to the people outside. I think that's the idea: to evangelize Guinea-Bissau you can not get inside the church; because those who are inside the church are already evangelical. One has to leave the church, has to influence outside the church.

Today, in contrast with a state perceived as increasingly absent from people's lives, the Evangelical minority is practicing a twofold strategy of social and political intervention. On the one side, churches are involved in building a parallel society, by providing their members with social services and strong solidarity bonds. Evangelical social action intensified in the early 2000s. In the case of IEGB, social work is coordinated by the Central Social, created within the Igreja Central but now operating at a national level. Its goal is to build a school in every place where IEGB plants a church. Today, the Central Social constructed two dozen schools alongside worship places, together with medical stations. Yet, social work is not limited to IEGB, as many other denominations are currently implementing community projects throughout the country. Their action is especially determinant in rural areas, were state structures are more lacking. Here is how Pastor Dionísio Rodrigues, a Guinean missionary working in the East of the country, describes the social work of Protestant Churches:

When I travel I see how the situation is, while many politicians do not walk where I walk. I have information that they do not have. […] The whole [political] life it is here in the capital. Some project has been implemented outside, but of little expansion. [...] For example, we go to the border villages, where there are no medical posts, no education, nothing. The people, to get an idea, do not feel the presence of the state there in those places, [...] but the church is there, you know, the little resource that the church has, it tries to meet the basic needs of the population, which the state does not. In my view, when politicians go there, they go just to seek votes. When people vote, all over, until next election. So if there would be a combined effort between the politicians who are in power and the church, I think that Guinea would be something else, but there is not. The church provides the population with its resources, which are scarce. Christianity wants this country to progress, to reach at least the levels of the West African countries. We do not want this cyclical upheaval that we have here. I never gave up my hope in Guinea-Bissau, I never thought that this country will sink, as many people say. I believe that one day this nation will emerge, […] not even in my generation, but my children will feel the sweetness of Guinea. That's why I am working hard, to see this dream to come true [...].

[Brazilian missionaries] come to support us, but not financially. They come with what they can do, their skills, nursing, and human resources. We take them to the villages, they make appointments, they instruct teachers, they do many things. This for us is a contribution that we are giving the state of Guinea-Bissau. If the church had good conditions for good schools, good health facilities, the church would do it, all that is within the reach of the church for the welfare of the population, because Jesus has taught us that. It's not just to preach the Word, but also to bless the people. So we want to deliver the full Gospel, caring for people and caring for the spirit of people, this is our philosophy of work [...].

For me, the responsibility of the situation that we are experiencing must be attributed to the Guinean state, which was not able to be a state, failed to establish itself as a state here. […] You know, people come, people go out, the state is never constant, there are always changes. So this is delaying us. [...] The church is making an effort to help, but it can not do everything because it does not have the conditions.

On the other side, some sections of the Evangelical movement are playing an increasingly active role in national politics[42]. In principle, Evangelical churches affirm the separation of faith and politics, leaving political freedom to their members. Hence, the Evangelical community does not have an official position on political affairs. It was precisely due to their political neutrality that IEGB's leaders could play a mediation role in military and political conflicts. Nonetheless, as a single citizen every believer is free to take part in political life. Throughout the history of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, cases of Evangelical politicians have been rare but not absent[43]. Furthermore, in recent decades some renowned figures from the Evangelical community have played a crucial public role. It is the case of Ernesto Lima, who was chairman of the mediation team during the civil war of 1998-99 (Lima 2007), and of Pastor Joaquim Correia, advisor on religious affairs of the current President of the Republic, Manuel Serifo Nhamadjo. Among Protestant churches, IEGB continues to play a prominent role in the relationship with the authorities, mainly through its National Council and the Central Church. The latter, as the only Portuguese-speaking congregation within IEGB, has been traditionally directed to the evangelization of the Guinean élite, as Pastor José Paulo[44] illustrates:

> I understood that in a Portuguese-speaking country, at least one church should have its activities in Portuguese. [...] Nobody says it but I say: when you speak Portuguese here in Guinea people admire you, they think it is something elite, right? Then the elements of the elite like to be identified as elite, isn't it? So if they come here, they will feel good. There is no sin in it [...]. My aim here at Central Church is to reach the elite of

[42] As illustrated by Gérald Gaillard, similar dynamics are operating within the Islamic community (Gaillard 2002).

[43] Among others: Luís Cabral (first President of the Republic), Filinto Vaz Martins (Minister of Industry, Energy and Water Resources under Luís Cabral's rule), Rafael Barbosa (president of the FDS party), Brandão Co (Minister of Health during civil war), Armando Procel (former Secretary of the National Assembly Board), Fernando Gomes (Ministry of Interiors in 2011-12), Baptista Té (actual ministry of Territorial Administration), Helena Barbosa (actual State Secretary of Culture and Sports), Marciano Indi (actual Deputy Mayor of Bissau).

[44] Pastor José Paulo Semedo is one of the protagonists of the historical transition from separation to participation. In the early 1990s, he was one of the first young Evangelicals to seek a theology training in Brazil. Later he got a law degree and became a renowned lawyer (he was the lawyer of Carlos Gomes Junior, the former Prime Minister and candidate to the presidency before the 12 April coup). Recently, there are rumours about his supposed candidacy in the upcoming national elections. As minister of the IEGB's Central Church and president of the National Council, he promoted the social action of the church since 2000.

> society. So during the 20 years I spent here leading this church, I lived attacking the elite of society. So today, I think as a result ... because the church was formerly only in the suburbs; and few elite people. But today here in this church we have lawyers, university professors, doctors, politicians, ministers, members of the opposition, we have everything. Because I thought that this group needs to be reached. That is how I worked. They called me elitist, just put whatever you want, my goal is this now.

From the state's point of view, the integration of Evangelical elements into the dominant class and the state apparatus responds to the logic of assimilation of the elites (Bayart 1989), aimed at gaining the Christian electorate, while controlling potential sources of dissent. An early example of this mechanism of assimilation is provided by the integration of many IEGB believers into the Ministry of Finance, under Luís Cabral's presidency. This initiative would take place through the mediation of Ernesto Lima, who was a well known customs officer since the time of colonial administration. Yet, this process of incorporation continued in the following decades, as long as Guinean political scene has been increasingly marked by references to ethnic and religious identities (Fernandes 1993; Gaillard 2002; Silva 2010). As a matter of fact, in the late 1980s the progressive loss of consensus among its traditional electorate, the Balanta peasantry, pressed PAIGC and Nino Vieira to draw up new alliances, especially with big Muslim traders and traditional chiefs. Later, the transition to a multi-party system urged all parties to take advantage of ethnic and religious cleavages in order to earn parts of electorate, whereas socialist and nationalist discourses were loosing their popularity.

From the point of view of the Evangelical community, the entry on political scene acquires a different meaning. Apparently, the Evangelical movement is actively committed to the utopian project to transform the state through evangelization. Many believers view the current state of affairs in Guinea-Bissau as a moral crisis, the only effective way to moralize the state being the conversion of their representatives. This is the firm belief of the women of the AGLOW International Association, who organized prayer meetings with several first ladies, with the aim of bringing the Gospel at the top of the state. The same opinion is shared by Pastor Felix Da Costa, who is doing mission work among the armed forces:

> When a person comes into contact with the Word of God, this person is transformed. Thus I started thinking: surely if the militaries here in Guinea-Bissau came into contact with the Gospel, they could be transformed. So I became interested in this work. [...]
>
> I began to go to the barracks [...]. But our work is very limited, because [...] today we do not have an official permit from the Government or the Military Command to develop the work [...]. But it is a job that is worth [it], I believe that if there was openness to the preaching of the Gospel in the barracks, it would change a lot. Because I believe that a man who knows God is a different man. In his behaviour, he is a man who ponders before acting, before doing anything, he remembers to be a man of God, he remembers he has to account for what he does, and then the fear of God comes. If something is wrong usually he stops doing it [...]
>
> The Gospel changes the man [...]; because here people fear the military. The militaries, in other words, are above the law. But the man who fears God knows that he may be above the law of men, but he has the law of God who is over him, you like it or not you are under the law of God and you will be responsible, as the Bible said [...]. Yes, he will be a military who sweared to defend the nation, but who knows he is a Christian; he cannot do whatever he wants [...]. This is why I believe that [...] if they facilitate the evangelistic work in the barracks, many militaries will become changed, and we will see men accessible to society.

Therefore, the conviction declared by Pastor Júlio Joaquim in his New Year's speech seems widely accepted within the Guinean Evangelical movement: the only solution to violence, corruption and poverty in Guinea-Bissau is the evangelization of society and the state.

At a second level of analysis, the growth of Evangelical Christianity can be interpreted against the background of a general shift to universal religions, which is recently involving both rural and urban populations. In particular, in the last years Islam and Christianity are actively spreading in the countryside, among ethnic groups traditionally devoted to indigenous religions, such as the Balanta. While I was in Bissau, the national TV news reported that on the same day, a Balanta rural community of 800 people had converted to Islam in Nhacra district. Apparently, these mass conversions are not isolated cases, especially

in the villages. In addiction, as noted by Gérald Gaillard (2002), the last decades are marked by the proliferation of Koranic schools, created by new Islamic organizations financed by Saudi Arabia. According to the author, these organizations are strongly committed to the conversion of "animist" groups, as well as to the re-islamization of communities devoted to "black Islam". In opposition to the local Muslim confraternities[45], young missionaries trained abroad are promoting a purified form of Islam, closest to the rules of *sunna* (Gaillard 2002).

Evangelical organizations are also quite active among Balanta communities, while focusing on individual rather than collective conversions. Significantly, according to a common view, the majority of Evangelical believers would be of Balanta origin. Finally, a similar strategy is followed by the Catholic Church: the ordination in 2000 of the first Bishop of Balanta origins, Monsignor José Camnaté, makes sense in the light of this race for the conversion of animist populations.

The rising success of universal religions among rural communities can be attributed to multiple factors. On the one hand, it can be ascribed to the social activism of religious NGOs, especially in areas where state structures are more deficient. In fact, the projects implemented by Muslim and Christian NGO, respectively funded by Saudi Arabia and Western countries, are frequently the only resources of health, education and basic infrastructure in rural areas. As I previously illustrated, the recent shift to social action occurred within the Evangelical movement is an outcome of its transition from an out-of-the-world to a socially engaged community. Regard to Catholic Church, its social work goes back to colonial time, but it experienced an intensification in the last decades (Koudawo 2001). Yet, social commitment is not limited to Christianity. On the contrary, as noted by Gérald Gaillard (2002), since the late 1980s emerged a number of Islamic associations, combining religious and social activism, supported by Arab countries and international organizations.

On the other hand, the growth of Christianity and Islam makes sense in a context where traditional ritual practices are increasingly associated with occult powers and underdevelopment, whereas universal religions are related to a "modern" way of life. In point of fact, in recent years the situation of economic crisis and political instability created an atmosphere of interpersonal distrust, expressed in accusations, rumours and anxieties concerning witchcraft, often directed against local politicians. This situation gradually

[45] In Guinea-Bissau, the main Muslim confraternities are the Tijane, widespread among Fula groups, and the Qadria, more common among Mandinga and Biafada communities (Gaillard 2002).

discredited indigenous religions in favour of universal confessions. Concurrently, rural populations are increasingly stigmatized as representatives of a traditional way of life and vision of the world, which would be an obstacle to progress and modernization (Bordonaro 2010). Within this framework, among rural populations the conversion to Islam and Christianity can be interpreted as a reaction against their stigmatization as "primitive", "superstitious" and "traditional", as in the case of Balanta communities (Sarró and De Barros forthcoming). This assumption makes sense if, following James Ferguson's reasoning, we consider modernity as a "social status implying certain institutional and economic conditions of life" (Ferguson 2006:168), stressing its social than its temporal dimension. In this perspective, in Africa the desire for modernity becomes a "claim for equal rights of membership in a spectacularly unequal global society" (ibid: 175)[46]. Accordingly, in the case of Guinean rural communities universal religions appear as more consistent than local cults with their aspirations to a modern life.

Far from being limited to the rural world, a similar desire for modernity is widespread in urban areas. In particular, as shown by many observers (Bordonaro 2009; 2010; Vigh 2010), the aspiration to a modern life result from a self-perception shared by young people living in Guinean towns, marked by a feeling of marginality, exclusion and social immobility. According to Lorenzo Bordonaro (2009), this view would be amplified by the contrast between an increasing availability of foreign signs and goods on the one hand, and a growing lack of opportunities on the other hand. Within this framework, migration to Europe appears as one of the few chances to claim citizenship in modernity, a claim expressed in the recurrent Creole phrase "*sai fora*" (get out).

The Evangelical churches meet the aspiration to modernity of many Guinean in various ways. On a representational dimension, they ideally connect the believers with the global community in Christ. Scholars of Christianity have pointed out the explicitly global aspirations of particular Christian movements (Coleman 2000; Knibbe 2009). Many studies have recorded the tendency of Pentecostal congregations to build their identity in terms of a universal Christianity regardless of national or ethnic connotations, as the recurrence of the term 'international' in most churches' names reveals (Van Dijk 1997; Ter Haar 1998; Corten

[46] Ferguson's reflections are based on a letter to the "members and officials of Europe" written by two boys from Guinea Conakry who were found dead in the landing gear of a plane landing in Brussels in 1998. In this letter, the authors asked 'Europeans' "to become like you" (*Harper's Magazine* no. 1794, November 1999, 22).

and Marshall-Fratani 2001; Glick-Schiller, Çaglar, and Guldbrandsen 2006). Hence, through their insertion in transnational religious networks, Evangelical and Pentecostal churches would enable single believers to imagine themselves as part of a wider world.

As well as connecting the believer with a transnational imagined community, Evangelical congregations provide them with more tangible resources. Indeed, as religious networks constitute a form of social capital, in many cases Evangelical membership turns out to be a springboard or a safety net for migration projects. I already noticed how since the 1990s the Evangelical churches promoted the physical mobility of their young members through the distribution of international scholarships. In some cases the financial support of travels for religious reasons has been an opportunity for migration plans. More often, Evangelical networks enable single believers to obtain travel documents, such as student, tourist and medical visa, which due to corruption and bureaucratic inefficiency are inaccessible to most of the Guinean population. Finally, as I will show in the next chapters, Evangelical connections provide migrant believers with identity and social ties in the host countries, facilitating their navigation through transnational spaces, as well as improving their conditions in everyday life.

Chapter 2

"Am I not free?" Conversion, between Ruptures and Continuities

In the previous chapter I traced the history of the Evangelical minority group in Guinea-Bissau, situating its trajectory within the colonial and post-colonial history of the country. In addition, I linked its recent expansion to the general shift towards universal religions, as well as to the general aspiration of urban and rural Guinean people to global connectiveness. In this chapter, I will probe the past of my interlocutors, exploring their personal and family stories and analysing their conversion narratives. Furthermore, I will relate the ethnographic material presented to theoretical debates on conversion, as well as to literature on ethnicity and religion in the Upper Guinean Coast. Finally, I will try to identify a common thread amongst the motivations at the origins of my interlocutors' conversions, despite the heterogeneity of their social and ethnic backgrounds.

The soldier of God

I first met Pastor Quintino in the spring of 2011. At that time, I was attending the meetings of a Christian association called Associação dos Crentes Evangélicos Guineenses em Portugal[1] (ACEGP), a point of reference for many Evangelicals coming from Guinea-Bissau and living in Greater Lisbon. Agostinho, a Guinean friend who helped me in the early days of my fieldwork, told me that Pastor Quintino was one of the elder leaders of the Evangelical community in Guinea-Bissau. Everyone treated him with great deference. Later, I had the opportunity to interview him several times, and I often attended his sermons, both in Lisbon and in Bissau. He remains the main minister of the Igreja Evangélica de Belém, one of the biggest and oldest congregations in Bissau. In addition he founded, together with a younger pastor, the Portuguese branch of the Igreja Evangélica da Guiné-Bissau, currently located in Lisbon, in the neighbourhood of Benfica. His life story is one of the most fascinating that I encountered during my research, not merely for its historical relevance. Besides covering almost seventy years of Guinean history, it brings to light many recurring elements of the conversion narratives that I collected over the course of my fieldwork. These narratives reveal

[1] Association of Guinean Evangelical Believers in Portugal.

how the subjective experience of conversion appears to be marked by a dialectic of rupture and continuity. As I will endeavour to illustrate, this tension emerges from the stories of the first generations of Guinean Evangelical converts, and lingers in some of the more recent conversion narratives. Finally, Quintino's life story shows the importance of "being connected" beyond the material aspect of economic migration, a topic that I will examine in depth in the following chapters.

Quintino Gomes was born in Biombo in 1946, into a Papel family. His mother died when he was three months old and he was raised by his father and his paternal aunt, the younger sister of his father. His aunt was a *n'pene*, a Papel traditional religious specialist who works under possession of an ancestral spirit (*oieke* in Papel language)[2]. After the death of Quintino's father, his aunt said that her brother had become her spirit-guide. As described by Quintino, this event troubled him deeply:

> When my father passed away, the first time that people went to consult my aunt, the voice that spoke was the voice of my father. I got tired of crying. I loved my father, I cried, I cried, and he stopped talking. They say that spirits do not like to see tears... I believed it was true, only after I converted I knew that it was not true. When you meet the souls of the dead, you cannot see them. Likewise they do not see us. They cannot have any contact with the living. It is the demons who are among the living and the dead now, they who are using the names of your dead relatives, of your ancestors: your grandfather, your father, your mother, your aunt. My father loved me so much. As we say, even if a fly was sitting on the top of my head, my dad would kill it. He did

[2] The two main Papel religious specialists are the *n'pene* (*balobero* in Kriol) and the *n'ssai* (*djambacosse* in Kriol). They can be female or male and play the role of diviners. The *n'pene* can mediate the word of *Ursi* (God, or Supreme Being), either through an ancestral spirit or a *bukau* (see below). The first kind of *n'pene* works within its lineage. The souls of persons who die in an untimely fashion remain in this world, and may cause misfortune to those belonging to the same lineage. Some of these souls will identify a person from their lineage to become his/her collaborator. The chosen person will become an *n'pene*, and will build a shrine (*bol* in Papel language, *baloba* in Kriol) to receive the spirit. The second kind of *n'pene* would work through a *bukau* (*kansaré* in Kriol), on behalf of the whole community. The *bukau* is a divination instrument shaped like a traditional bier, carried by four people and interrogated by the *n'pene* in a specific ritual. The *n'pene* interprets the messages of *Ursi* by reading the movements of the *bukau.* The primary role of this ritual device is to identify sorcerers, but it can also be used to deal with larger disasters, such as war, drought, and epidemics.
By contrast, the *n'ssai* collaborates with an *ussai* (*iran* in Kriol, meaning a natural spirit). According to Einarsdóttir, a *n'ssai* may fight against sorcery by collaborating with an *ussai*, but he or she is also capable of engaging in sorcery on his or her own. Besides practicing divination, many *bassai* specialize in healing, using herbal medicines and the spiritual powers of their invisible partner (Einarsdóttir 2004: 33-34).

> not want anything to touch me. But after his death, [according to our tradition] he could make me get sick. [...] The soul of the person who died wants you to sacrifice an animal, a goat, a cow, an ox, etc. If you do not, you will die. That's what these spirits cause. [...] Whatever the cost, you may have nothing to eat but you have to collect money in order to get what is needed for that sacrifice. So, unfortunately the devil has blinded the minds of people so that they cannot understand.

When his father died Quintino was ten years old, and his family was living in Bissau. It was during the time of colonial war, and many people were moving to the capital to escape from conflict zones. Quintino remained in Bissau with his aunt until she returned to Biombo, and then he moved to his uncle's house, where he lived with his friends and cousins.

In the late 1960s, Quintino met his future wife, who is also Papel. She was a neighbour, and her parents had already betrothed her to another man. However, after three years of flirting they managed to convince their families to arrange their marriage. They married in a traditional ceremony, which lasted three months and ended in December 1969. Meanwhile, Quintino's name was called up by the conscription centre, so that, in January 2, 1970, he joined up and only left the army in 1975, when the war ended. He was incorporated into the Comandos Africanos, an elite military unit made up of native soldiers[3]. Up until that time, Comandos were a volunteer corps, in which people enlisted mainly for reasons of prestige or in order to receive a special treatment. In contrast, Quinino's company was directly recruited for command. He did not explain the reason for this anomaly, but I suppose that it was due to a shortage of volunteers in the year of his enlistment.

After his recruitment, Quintino fought in the bush for two years. Then he returned to Bissau, going on mission from time to time. It was then that his wife became pregnant. However, during early pregnancy she started to feel some pain, so Quintino and his wife went to a traditional healer (a *n'ssai*)[4]. The man said that a sorcerer had put an object in the woman's belly[5], but assured them he would be able to pull it out. When she went to receive

[3] See chapter 1, note 22.
[4] See note 2.
[5] Among the Papel, as well as in other African societies, sorcery is considered a serious and growing problem. Driven by envy, vindictiveness or general bad intentions, people can decide to use sorcery to hurt a rival or someone they dislike, causing him or her illness or even death. Sorcery is particularly considered to be the main cause of a child's death or a miscarriage. A supposed victim of sorcery will be cured by a *n'ssai* (*djambacosse*), as the origin of his or her disease is ascribed to an occult attack and considered resistant to Western medicine.

the treatment, Quintino's wife was subjected to a very violent massage, and was given a roots infusion to drink. However, when she went home the pain continued, and she did not stop suffering the whole night. At dawn, the couple went to the hospital. When they arrived at the hospital the doctor examined her, and immediately afterwards she started miscarrying. The doctor told them that the healer's treatment had made the womb to move from its proper location and that she could no longer have children.

Quintino's company was made up of one hundred and twenty soldiers. Only twenty of them died during the war, while many were killed after Independence, in the episodes of violence which followed the seizure of power by PAIGC. As recalled by Quintino, many ex-Comandos were massacred in a witch-hunt by the militants of PAIGC, who went house-to-house to capture and execute them. According to Quintino, it was God who saved him from certain death. Also, he said, few people knew that he had been a Comando, because he did not flaunt the fact, unlike many of his comrades. When the nationalists were going house-to-house in search of evidence, such as documents or photographs related to the war, one of his colleagues went to his house, took all the pictures and burned everything, so that he was not identifiable.

After the war ended, Quintino was already an Evangelical believer. The story of his conversion is a long and troubled one. He first heard the Word of God when he arrived in Bissau. Every Sunday afternoon, Evangelical believers went to evangelize in his house, which was located in Belém neighbourhood, close to the Missão Evangélica compound. Sometimes the missionaries organized evangelistic campaigns, and invited people to go and watch. Quintino wanted to convert, but he was held back by the emotional and social obligations he felt towards his aunt:

> I wanted to convert, but my aunt had this spirit that was speaking in her mouth. She needed a lot of things, a lot of money sometimes, to do those ceremonies. My cousin,

The *n'ssai* will first diagnose the patient through divination and then heal him or her with medicines and/or bodily rituals. These practices are said to be aimed at drawing out dangerous objects previously incorporated into the victim's body by the sorcerer (*feticero* in Kriol), such as hair, bones, bloody flesh, and stones. Usually perpetrators and victims of sorcery are believed to belong to the same lineage. However, according to contemporary popular opinion, people use sorcery even to kill those who do not belong to their own lineage. This change is commonly ascribed to a rise in people's greediness and enviousness. Apparently, Papel do not believe in unconscious witchcraft, and sorcery is rather conceived as a conscious act performed on behalf of a person who contracts the act out to a specialist (Einarsdóttir 2004: 116-118).

who was the only son of my aunt, died, and my uncle, who was her husband, also died. She had no one besides me; I had to help her in arranging what she needed. So, when I heard the Word of God I said: "If I convert, I will not be able to help her; I will not use my money to do that sorcery". But there came a time when God said "It's enough", and I converted. It was during one of the campaigns conducted by Pastor José Pessoa[6] [...]. It was in front of Lino Correia's stadium. There were many people, that day seven people were converted. I did not know there was a campaign there; it was by chance that I passed by there [...].

I often say this: "My conversion was more or less like that parable told by Lord Jesus. When a corn seed falls in a place where there is little earth, it is born, and then due to the lack of water, it becomes dry". It was what happened to me. [Actually, he withdrew from church shortly after his conversion]. When I converted, my mates made fun of me, I invited them to come to church with me and they would not come. But after I got lost, a colleague of mine said to me once: "Quintino, you know what? I am now Protestant". "Are you? Well done!". "Then let's go to church". We arranged, but I didn't go. Then he came to me and insisted: "So how is it? Let's go next week". And I didn't go again. He urged me. It was in January 20, 1974, that I returned to church [...].

I had acquired many vices, I drank too much, I used to get drunk, to lay done on the street, and I smoked so much. I once smoked thirty-one packets in just eleven days. But on January 20, 1974, when I gave myself to my Lord, He suddenly performed a miracle in my life. Although I had often tried to quit smoking, to quit drinking, I could not. But that day something happened to me, it was just God. Since then I have no idea how much a litre of wine or a packet of cigarettes costs. After I converted, God gave me the power to overcome all my vices [...]. Likewise, when I converted I had many friends, relatives, cousins, playmates, we had fun and everything. First thing, I stopped to deal with them. Because if I had continued having fun with them, then I would have gone back to the same condition I was in before converting. Or kept on doing the things I had said that I regretted having done. So I broke off contact with them, or rather I stopped to have commonality with them. But

[6] José Oliveira Pessoa, Portuguese, and Marie Backen, American, were ministers of the Bolama church in the 1950s (Lima 2007).

occasionally, when I was with them I talked about Jesus, I gave my testimony, and thank God they respected me, they did not persecute me for it, no. Then I started to have communion with the believers, with the church, to live with them. By that time I began to grow spiritually [...].

So when I converted I was in the army, still active in the war. As I said, we wore a lot of idols. Why? To defend yourself! They said that when a bullet hit your body it did not enter, you should have those things tied onto the body, some threads, whatever. I had it before. But after I converted I gave all this up, I burned everything there was to burn, I broke everything there was to break. I said: “Only God is watching over me, it is He who provides protection and no one else”. But, unfortunately, many have died due to their overconfidence in those illusions [idols].

At the time I was twenty-four. So I gave myself to the Lord and I felt free. I did not think about my aunt. Okay, I continued to help her by giving her rice to eat and everything else, but God did something with her. [...] She told me: “Don’t think that I’ll use the money you give me in my diabolical ceremonies, no. I get what you give me to eat. And when I need [money for my ceremonies], I'll borrow it, and when people come to consult me, then they pay me and I'll pay back the people to whom I owe money”. I said: “It was God who gave you this wisdom” [...].

Unfortunately, my aunt never converted. Well, I talked to her so much in order to try and convert her. And she said: “It won’t happen now, but later, when I will return home”. Her house was sixty miles from Bissau. She said: “When I get back, you will hear news”. Actually, she thought about converting. But it did not happen because - this was what she told me - she went out one day to go to church. The church was twelve kilometres from her home. As she had those spirits, the spirits had special clothes; she could not walk without those clothes. So, when she intended to convert she took off all those clothes, she wore normal clothes, and she left home. On the way, she met another person who was in the same condition - she also had that spirit who used to possess her - who said: “So where are you going?” “Oh, I 'm going there.” “Are you going there? A person who has a spirit of great power, walking unprotected in these clothes, like a young girl?” So, she said, the fear entered her, and she returned home. You see? She had the heart to go and convert, but she became afraid when she

> met this person. Otherwise she would have gone there to convert. Unfortunately it did not happen, she never returned [to church], up until her death.

When the war ended, in 1975, Quintino felt the duty to serve the Lord. "I felt the call" - he affirmed – "seeing the needs of the people who were walking in darkness, who were deceived, deluded [...]. Seeing people who were like me, who walked towards perdition in great strides; I felt I had to tell them about God, about the future". So, in December 1977 he entered the Bible Institute[7] of the Igreja Evangélica, and in 1980 was ordained as Pastor. Soon after this, he was assigned to a congregation in Bolama, in the Bijagós islands, where he stayed for seven years and six months. In 1986 he was elected as President of the National Council of Igreja Evangélica, and was transferred to Bissau. In the capital, he was assigned to the church where he converted, the Igreja de Belém[8].

When Quintino became a Pastor, he started to travel to Portugal, in order to attend international Evangelical seminars and to maintain connections with Portuguese churches. However, he often had problems obtaining a visa at the Portuguese Embassy in Bissau:

> The last time I tried to come here was in 2003. [I applied for a visit visa] at the request of the Assembly of God of Queluz. And they rejected, or rather deferred my visa. When I had almost everything ready to collect the visa, I arrived and they said, "Look, your visa has been rejected". I asked: "But why?" I scheduled a meeting with the consul; I went there to find out what was the reason. "Ah - she said – it was the Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras[9]. It's they who deferred the visa". [...] I spoke a little harshly to her, "You tar everyone with the same brush. You think I'll go to Portugal and stay there, but you must respect me, because I fought alongside the Portuguese. If it was not for the grace of God, I could have remained in the forests of

[7] At that time, the Instituto Bíblico da Igreja Evangélica was in Bissau, in the premises of the Missão Evangélica.
[8] The Igreja de Belém is the second congregation established by the Missão Evangélica. It is located in a nice building on the side of the Missão Evangélica's offices, in the Caracol neighbourhood, in Bissau. The first house of prayer, later called Igreja Central, originated in the city centre, and was mainly frequented by literate believers belonging to the upper middle class. Later, the mother church gave rise to a new congregation in the current district of Belém-Caracol, a suburban area at that time. This community experienced rapid growth, mostly involving the popular classes. Consequently, two separate congregations were formed: the Igreja Central, where literate believers remained, and teachings were given in Portuguese, and the Igreja de Belém, where the largest group of new converts went, and teachings were given in Kriol (Lima 2007; see also chapter 1).
[9] The SEF (Foreigners and Borders Service) is the Portuguese public institution responsible for controlling and managing immigration into Portugal.

> Guinea, like some of my colleagues who unfortunately died". She said: "Is that so?" I said: "Yes!" She said: "You should put that information on the visa application form". "What information? That I fought alongside the Portuguese? No need. You have my passport there, I went to England twice, I went to the United States twice, I went to France twice, and I was not required to put any information that I collaborated with these countries. I went to England, to the United States, countries more developed than Portugal. [...] No, I have a commitment to serve God in Guinea. I'm going to visit the churches, to visit the brothers there, nothing more".

In the light of these problems, Quintino started to think about applying for Portuguese nationality. As he emphasised repeatedly, if he succeeded in becoming a naturalized Portuguese he would not have to apply for a visa whenever he needed to travel to Europe. In addition, as he was wounded in combat while fighting for the Portuguese, he was entitled to a war pension from the Portuguese government. So, in 2005 he moved to Lisbon to deal with the issues of nationality and pension, and he was still there at the time of writing (2014). As the following quotation reveals, Quintino's perseverance in fighting for his rights is a matter of recognition, as well as reflecting his aspiration to freedom of movement:

> You see the injustice here? I even asked the lady there in the office in charge: "Can a child lose paternity from his father?" She said: "No, a father is a father for life". And I asked, "Can a citizen lose his nationality?" She said no. "So why did I lose my nationality? I was born Portuguese, I was registered as Portuguese!" [...] I received Portuguese nationality when I was registered. You know, in Guinea unfortunately not everyone was registered as Portuguese. [...] But I was registered as Portuguese at the time of the war, so I had to fight for Portugal; I'm Portuguese. She told me: "Look, a law was passed after the war, saying that those who had Portuguese nationality had to confirm it". I said: "This story is all wrong, we were not told that before!" [If anyone had told us] we would have gone there to the embassy in Guinea to confirm, but unfortunately we knew nothing, absolutely nothing! [...] Now Guinean soldiers, if they were wounded in combat, they are entitled to a pension [...]. I have this right, because I was injured. [...] There are people who were there at the time, one is a colonel and one

> is a sergeant, they are my witnesses; because you have to get two witnesses, as well as medical certification of the injury. Then they will send you for a consultation with the doctor. That's what I just did; now I'm waiting for them to send me to the medical board, to see what degree of disability they will grant me for the pension.

In 2010, together with another Guinean pastor, Quintino established the Portuguese branch of the Igreja Evangélica da Guiné-Bissau in Lisbon. The newly-founded congregation started to meet every Sunday in Campo Grande Park, performing open-air services. Later, the Assembly of God of Benfica hosted them in their place of worship. As Quintino explained to me, they decided to found a new congregation because Evangelical Guinean migrants have difficulties integrating in Portuguese churches, and feel undervalued. Although in principle the IEGB in Benfica is open to all Portuguese-speaking believers, it is largely aimed at Guinean migrants, as is evident in the choice of the official language, which is Kriol. The congregation, which started out with only seven people, now has around one hundred members. Up until now, Quintino has still not been granted Portuguese nationality.

The conversion debate

This chapter is concerned with the issue of conversion, a subject which has been discussed at length by anthropological scholars of Christianity. The debate on African conversion has as its starting point Robin Horton's articles published in the journal *Africa*, where the author addressed the issue of African religious change. Horton's work aroused much discussion in the 1970s, and still remains a point of reference for academics studying religious change in Africa, despite having been subsumed in many respects by subsequent scholarship[10]. Horton's starting question concerns the causes of transition from traditional to world religions in Africa. His theory is grounded on an "intellectualist" approach, which understands religion as a system of interpretation and control over space-time events. According to this view, conversion is understood as a process through which people struggle to adapt their "stock of theoretical concepts to the explanation, prediction, and control of events in a new unfamiliar social situation" (Horton 1971:94). The author combines this cognitive position with a dualist

[10] For a comprehensive synthesis of the debate on "African convention", see Mary 1998.

typology of social contexts: while in pre-modern African societies "most events affecting the life of the individual occur within the microcosm of the local community" (Horton 1971:101), the advent of modernity in Africa led to a gradual expansion of the horizon of subjective experience. The "typical traditional cosmology" would be "a system of ideas about unobservable personal beings whose activities are alleged to underpin the events of the everyday world" (ibid: 101). Within this cosmological vision, the invisible world would be conceived as two-tiered: on the one side, we would find the lesser spirits, particularly those concerned with the affairs of the local community (i.e. the microcosm); on the other side, we would find a Supreme Being concerned with the wider world (i.e. the macrocosm). Consistent with the pre-modern social setting, traditional African cosmologies would have produced a rich set of ideas about lesser spirits and techniques for manipulating them, while ideas about the Supreme Being tended to be more sparse and vague, and techniques for approaching Him poorly developed. Likewise, moral rules would have been applied within local communities rather than universally. According to Horton, this very cosmological arrangement enabled the African societies to face the dramatic changes that they experienced in the wake of colonialism. Hence while the introduction of the capitalist economy and the nation state would have led to "a weakening of the boundaries which formerly insulated their various microcosms from a wider world" (ibid: 102), the embrace of Christianity and Islam corresponded to a development of local ideas about the Supreme Being. Horton argues his point by proposing a thought-experiment in which he invites us to imagine colonisation without missions and missionaries. His inference is that even without missions traditional cosmologies would have evolved into some form of monotheism in response to other aspects of modernity. His thesis, then, reduces Islam and Christianity to the role of catalysts of change: "the beliefs and practices of the so-called world religions are only accepted where they happen to coincide with responses of the traditional cosmology to other, non-missionary factors of the modern situation" (ibid: 104). Hence, Horton's theory of "African conversion" focuses on permanence rather than rupture in religious change, emphasising the continuities between old and new beliefs.

Horton's work has raised many objections. It has been described as too simplistic, mechanical and grounded on an evolutionist scheme which suggests an inevitable shift from village particularism to urban universalism and from local to global religions (Mary 1998).

Subsequent analyses endeavour to develop a more complex vision of conversion in African contexts. Some authors have criticized the artificial separation between religious and secular spheres implicit in the "thought-experiment" proposed by Horton. More generally, many scholars have underlined how intellectual theory does not take into sufficient account the multiple facets of the religious encounter, including the power relations involved in missionary activity, the modalities of the emotional and spiritual engagement of those subjected to missions; the role of specific religious agents; and the transformation of the categories of personhood and morality. Humphrey J. Fisher (1985) emphasized the importance of Islam in producing real effects in African history, particularly its central role in African state formation. Although he focuses on the case of Islam, Fisher's argument applies to Christianity as well: by excluding the missionaries and their message from his theory of religious change, Horton neglects the crucial role of world religions in social transformation.

In the wake of a renewed interest in colonialism, and focusing on the case of British evangelicals working in South Africa since the mid-nineteenth century, Jean and John Comaroff (1986, 1991) explore the role of missionaries in the colonial project. In particular, the authors stress the role of Protestant missions in the education and creation of African elites occupying the lower ranks of colonial administration, as well as in instilling an entrepreneurial, individualistic and capitalistic ethos among African populations. In their view, by introducing a series of values and socio-cultural forms, such as farming technologies, the nuclear family, private property, and a new conception of time, the evangelists succeeded in producing a "colonization of consciousness" (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991).

One of the authors most engaged in the conversion debate was John D. Y. Peel (1990; 1977), the progenitor of what has been called the "interactionist paradigm" (Mary 1998). Using the analysis of biographic narratives of conversion, local histories, specific missionary strategies, and structures of religious power and their interaction with political organizations as his starting point, Peel describes conversion as a complex and manifold process, focusing on Yorubaland and other African settings. Far from discarding Horton's insights, Peel conceives conversion not only as the conclusion of reasoned deliberation originating from an intellectual challenge, but also as a social act, emerging from engagement in a given community. Furthermore, Peel introduces a change in perspective, which is focused less on

the analysis of two opposed ideal types ("African traditional religion" versus "world religions"), and more on the interaction between historical agents: "as it has historically happened, conversion in Africa is above all a process of impassioned communication, whose outcome, while conditioned by the assumption, interests and resources of the participants, is in the fullest sense the product of their interaction. […] 'Conversion' was what one of the parties aimed at, but what emerged was something far more complex and incomplete" (Peel 1990:339). However, Peel's criticism is not just addressed at Horton's cognitive reductionism. At the same time, in a more recent work, Peel (Peel 2003) questions the argument of scholars such as the Comaroffs, who see missionaries as mere agents of colonialism and capitalism. Rather, a proper account of the missionary encounter should acknowledge the historical specificity of different missionary groups, the ambivalent relations between religious and secular institutions, and "the distinct cultural dynamics of the world religions themselves" (Peel 2003:4). In other words, a comprehensive analysis of religious change in Africa should take into account its multiple components, including local religions, colonialism, Christianity and Islam.

Finally, more recent analyses differ markedly from Horton's theory of continuity theory. Horton's account of "African Conversion" is contrary to any notion of radical rupture, resembling more a reinterpretation of the original template of thought. In contrast, conversion has been described more recently as a radical break with the past. This view is particularly popular among scholars who have studied the rise of Pentecostalism in Africa and situated it within the specific features of this movement. The main point of reference for this perspective is Birgit Meyer's article "'Make a Complete Break with the Past'. Memory and Post-Colonial Modernity in Ghanaian Pentecostalist Discourse" (Meyer 1998). The sentence cited in the title is a leitmotif of global Pentecostal discourse, but it acquires a special salience and distinct meaning in Ghanaian Pentecostal churches. Indeed, the notion of rupture is critical to understanding contemporary Ghanaian Pentecostalism and its recent popularity. The author observes how present Ghanaian Pentecostal churches are reproducing and reinforcing the rhetorical strategies of temporality employed by Protestant missionaries in the nineteenth and early twentieth-century. These strategies were founded on a process of demonization of local religion, whereby local spirits and deities were integrated into the Protestant discourse as "Christian" demons. At the same time, "tradition" was represented as a matter of the "past",

in order to mark a boundary between Christianity and "traditional religion", despite their actual coexistence. Indeed, by emphasising that switching to Christianity (being "born again" in Pentecostal language) entails a "complete break with the past", current Pentecostalists underscore the notion of rupture introduced by their predecessors. Meyer's article is often quoted to support discontinuist approaches to conversion, especially with reference to African Pentecostals and their rhetoric of separation from a personal as well as a collective sinful past. However, Meyer's argument is more complex than it sounds, as it shows how this "break with the past" is impossible to achieve, and thus incomplete by nature. In fact, while mission churches asserted that conversion implies the permanent crossing of the boundary between tradition and Christianity, Pentecostal churches have developed a more ambivalent discourse. In their view, conversion is less a clean break than a long-term process; Satan is always lurking in the life of every born-again. Hence the importance of a constant fight against Satan, which is expressed particularly through deliverance, i.e. a ritual practice of exorcism aimed at liberation from all forms of occult coercion. As Meyer illustrates, Pentecostal deliverance is twofold: on the one side, it is intended to release the individual from a personal sinful past; on the other, it is designed to relieve him/her of an ancestral past that is conceived in negative terms. In reality, many Ghanaian families are said to suffer from ancestral curses, hailing from covenants between a family member and a satanic force, which affect the whole lineage. These curses are thought to result in personal misfortune, psychological and physical disease, and overall difficulty in making progress. As even born-again believers are not automatically liberated from these burdens, they are compelled to resort to deliverance in order to gain full control over their lives. In deliverance sessions, liberation from satanic bonding is achieved through remembrance, aimed at revealing the occult sources of present troubles. Becoming aware of ancestral curses is thus the premise for getting rid of them. Therefore, the alleged break from "the past" is only made possible through a "dialectics of remembering and forgetting" (ibid: 318). Moreover, even if an afflicted believer is healed through a symbolical separation from his or her family, blood and social ties can never be cut. According to Meyer, the centrality of deliverance in the life of Pentecostal believers reveals a tension between the ideal of individual independence, founded on the idea of personal salvation, and the continuous importance of family ties. On the one hand, Pentecostal churches promote a new individualist ethics which matches the aspirations of women and young people who are trying

to progress economically in contemporary Ghana. In this sense, Meyer notes an analogy between the Pentecostal rhetoric of rupture and modernization theory, which defines modernity in terms of progress and continuous renewal. On the other hand, the Pentecostal "break with the past" is always incomplete: "the emphasis laid on the difficulty of getting rid of ancestral curses indicates the tremendous difficulties pentecostalists encounter when attempting to sever family ties" (Meyer 1998: 324). Hence, rather than a pragmatic prescription, the emphasis on the rupture "serves as a temporalizing strategy through which persons with whom one actually shares time and space are represented as backward, as not deserving a place in the modem world and as hindering one from becoming fully born again and modern" (ibid: 329). Therefore, despite the rhetoric of discontinuity, Pentecostal practices show that the links with "the past" still matter. "Rather than exchanging the 'past' identity with its emphasis on family ties for a new, individualist identity, [Ghanaian Pentecostalism] offers members an elaborate discourse and ritual practice to oscillate between the two and to address the gap which exists between aspirations and actual circumstances. In this way, members are enabled to focus on the ambiguity of the modern, pentecostalist notion of progress that endorsed a denial of the cultural roots and, at the same time, asserts the actual influence of these roots on the life of believers" (ibid: 340).

In this review of literature on conversion and religious change, the last work I would like to analyse is Joel Robbins' *Becoming Sinners: Christianity and Moral Torment in Papua New Guinea* (2004). Robbin's monograph is focused on a Melanesian group called the Urapmin, which underwent a rapid process of Christianization over the last two decades. Although not concerned with the African context, Robbins' work offers many insights into how conversion is experienced by Evangelical Guineans. Rather than focusing on the intellectual, political or social aspects of conversion, it emphasises the role of morality in religious change, exploring the moral puzzles involved in living between the logic of two different cultures. It is in the moral domain, he says, that the differences between values are most likely to be consciously recognized, and change is brought to consciousness. In fact, according to Robbins, in the case of Urapmin, Christianization did not lead to a hybrid entity, drawing together elements from two distinct religious traditions. On the contrary, the distinctiveness of contemporary Urapmins consists in their daily effort to live between two

contradictory moral systems: on the one side, that consistent with their traditional form of life; on the other, the moral logic of the Pentecostal branch of Christianity which they adopted.

Conceptualizing Christianity as a kind of culture, the author debates the reasons and motivations that led Urapmin people to take on a new culture so comprehensively. Similar to other scholars (Horton 1971; Peel 1977), Robbins begins with the assumption that the motives for change must primarily be sought in the features of the culture that is changing. In fact, the author discards certain classic explanations of religious change, which do not apply in the Urapmins' case, such as the combined action of an intense missionary effort, together with the compulsions and seductions of colonial or Western orders (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991; Comaroff 1997), or the role of socioeconomic dislocation in urging local groups to adopt new conceptual schemes (Peel 1968; Horton 1971). As Urapmin people did not undergo radical social or economic transformation, nor were subject to missionary activity, but turned to Christianity on their own, a proper understanding of their conversion should be searched for in the features of Urapmin traditional culture, as well as in the specificity of the Christian culture they adopted. According to Robbins, three aspects of pre-contact Urapmin culture were particularly important in prompting the Urapmin to adopt Pentecostal culture. Firstly, the recent loss of their central role in the regional ritual system engendered among the Urapmin a deep sense of humiliation, resulting in a desire for radical change. Secondly, Urapmin pre-contact culture assigned a great value to moral deliberation, due to a fluid and open-to-change social system which stressed the importance of the relationship between the law and the will. This insistence on moral responsibility predisposed Urapmin people to think about themselves as "sinners". Finally, the role of Big Men[11] in promoting innovation in order to draw people into their clientele network inclined them to foster Christianization. In addition to these internal motivations, another order of factors lay in the features of the specific Christian branch adopted by Urapmin. According to the author, Pentecostalism is potentially appealing in the non-Western world because, unlike other kind of Christian traditions, it offers a sort of spiritual democratization: it makes the Spirit available to everyone; it localizes Christian authority; it directs attention away from the centres of the global landscape, to the margins in which people see themselves to be living. So, Robbins says, "while experienced marginalization and its attendant humiliations act as a push factor in the adoption process, the

[11] Among Urapmins, likewise in other Melanesian contexts, Big-Men are local leaders who owe their influence to their ability to gain followers, thanks to personal skills such as oratory talent, courage and gardening ability.

cultural content of Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity itself constitutes a pull factor" (Robbins 2004: 33).

However, Robbins continues, the Urapmin were still troubled. Actually, despite their readiness to adopt Pentecostal culture as an entiretyin whole, they kept reproducing the social and economic grounds of their traditional lives: their families, their gardens, their hunting territories. Therefore, while adopting a Christian culture, they were simultaneously trying to live within the culture that supplied the grounds for adoption the new religion. Drawing on Dumont's theory (1992; 1980), Robbins interprets Urapmin moral tension as a contradiction between two paramount values: relationalism and individualism. On the one side, the Urapmin moral system matches a Melanesian pattern which has been called "relationalist", wherein a person is regarded not as a discrete individual but as a "microcosm of relations" (Strathern 1988), and those who try to disentangle themselves from their relationships are harshly disapproved. On the other side, Christian culture would be individualist by nature, as the individual is seen as the sole unit of divine judgement. The tension between these two moral logics would be especially evident in Urapmin difficulty in accepting the idea of individual salvation. According to the author, a set of devices, ranging from Pentecostal rituals to millennial imaginary and practices, are enacted by Urapmin believers in order to face this moral challenge and assuage their guilt over the "sins" they commit. Despite their attempts to balance individualist and relationalist views of salvation, however, "the old and new moral systems both remained in play and the Urapmin remained troubled" (Robbins 2004:313). In Robbin's view, thus, the unsynthetized duality of the Urapmin cultural system constitutes a kind of "moral hybridity". The coexistence of Christian culture and traditional forms of life can lead to a situation in which the two cultures are brought together but not reconciled. As a result, Urapmin people could continue to experience a sense of moral failure, but a permanent openness to change as well, reflected in their profound hope in a more perfect future.

The conversion debate commenced with a theory on religious change that addressed the topic of conversion within a single explanatory framework (Horton 1971). In contrast, recent works on conversion tend to avoid monocausal explanations of religious change, proposing more complex and historically determined understanding. While formerly conversion was conceived alternatively in terms of radical rupture or continuous process, now

it appears as a much more multifaceted and ambivalent phenomenon, made up of continuity and discontinuity, history and social structure, global and local worldviews, moralities and biographies. At the same time, despite the criticisms they raised, some of the ideas that emerged in the 1970s' debate still offer important keys to interpret religious change in the contemporary world. In the following pages, I will try to employ some of these in my interpretation of the conversion narratives which I collected over the course of my research. Prior to sharing the life stories of my interlocutors, however, I would like to first describe the religious landscape of their homeland, Guinea-Bissau.

Landlords, strangers, and creoles

Historically, the territory of Guinea-Bissau belongs to a wider region which has been called Upper Guinean Cost (Rodney 1970), including the part of the coast located between the southern bank of the Gambia River and present south-eastern Liberia, covering the territories of six current West African countries (Gambia; southern Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea Conakry, Sierra Leone, and Liberia). In terms of physical environment, the Upper Guinea Coast is very heterogeneous, including three ecological zones marked by different vegetation and distinct rainfall patterns: the mangrove in the coastal lowlands; the savannah in the hills and plateaus of the transitional area, and the forest in the Hinterland Mountains. As the historian George Brooks illustrates, long-term changes in these rainfall patterns had an enduring impact on the social formation of the region, influencing social structures, political forms, trade and migration practices, and warfare strategies (Brooks 1993; Brooks 2003).

Similarly to other areas of the region, before colonization the social and political landscape of Guinea-Bissau was socially, politically and linguistically heterogeneous, including small groups with acephalous forms of political organization, as well as large centralized polities whose members lived in relatively large villages. Moreover, throughout its history the area has been the scene of many encounters between native and foreign groups, including Mande-speaking populations (contemporarily identified as Mandingo) and the Portuguese. The former came from the Mande heartland at the headwaters of the Niger River from the thirteenth century onwards, impelled by the increasingly dry climate in the interior, tsetse fly infestations and the political dynamics of the Sudanese states. Their expansion began with small waves of migrant agriculturalists and blacksmiths, and continued with

Islamized groups of traders and state-building warriors. The latter arrived in the mid-fifteenth century, and for many centuries their relationship with local people centred on the slave trade. Indeed, it was only in the first decades of the twentieth century that the colonial administration was fully established, when native resistance was strongly repressed by a Portuguese military campaign of "pacification". Both Mande expansion and European presence affected the social, economic and political landscape of the region, engendering complex reactions of resistance, acceptance and adaptation on the part of autochthonous groups. Far from being subjected to the domination of the later arrivals, the first settlers put in place mechanisms of assimilation and integration, based on matrimonial alliances and religious affiliations. Historians have shown that over the course of this long history of inter-social contact, the relationships between firstcomers and newcomers were based on a "landlord-stranger" pattern of exchange, which emerged in the context of long-distance trade networks and applied in the interaction with Portuguese seafarers. In fact, as illustrated by George Brooks (1993; 2003), when European traders arrived they were compelled to adhere to the landlord-stranger system of reciprocity. On the one hand, travellers were provided with food and lodging, their possessions were secured, and they were allowed to marry local women. Obligations associated to kinship affiliation, as well as customary law believed to be supported by divine sanctions, ensured such hospitality and behaviour towards strangers. On the other hand, foreigners were subjected to various restrictions, including the use of local modes of barter commerce, the payment of taxes and adherence to local customs and practices. Observance of these conditions was secured by the spiritual powers thought to be wielded by landlords through their affiliation with the spirits of the land. Within this framework, a crucial role was played by the strangers' local wives and children, who worked as interpreters of languages and cultures and collaborators in commercial exchanges, and who, in some cases, accumulated considerable wealth. As observed by George Brooks, "traditional patterns of hospitality towards strangers continued [over time] – testimony to long-standing and tenaciously held social practices among western African peoples" (Brooks 1993: 39). In this sense, if we accept the idea of the permanence of landlord-stranger reciprocities up to present times, we could connect these patterns of hospitality to the expectation of contemporary Guinean migrants to find a similar treatment when travelling

away from home. An expectation that is, however, destined not be met in many cases, as it will be shown in chapter 6.

In the territory corresponding to actual Guinea-Bissau, interactions led over time to a mixture of social and cultural forms, fostering the emergence of multi-ethnic communities where personal and collective identities were marked by multiple senses of belongings and a high degree of fluidity. If colonial ethnographic literature reported the existence of more than twenty ethnic groups within the territory of the former Portuguese Guinea[12], the actual situation was in all likelihood – and still is - much more complex and fluid, marked by multi-ethnic alliances, interethnic marriages and the internal mobility of individuals and families (Forrest 2003; Crowley 2000). At the same time, the landlord-stranger pattern facilitated the creation of new social formations, including Creole and settler groups.

The Guinean Creole society has its origins in this context of social interactions[13]. The autochthonous societies provided the *lançados* – Portuguese and Cape Verdean traders who had 'thrown' themselves upon the indigenous population and were living in African villages – with the same pattern of reciprocity already used in interactions with Mande traders which regulated the long-distance flow of goods, ideas and people between the coast, the savannah area, and the Sahel. One of the basic mechanisms through which the *lançados* were partially integrated into the African villages was marriage with women belonging to the landlords' kin group. Despite remaining strangers, thanks to these kinship bonds the *lançados* were allowed to join cult group and age-sets, becoming members of the ruler's clientele. At the same time, they turned into cultural brokers, facilitating exchanges between Portuguese and Cape Verdean suppliers of European goods and African rulers, who traded in slaves. One of the

[12] There is no consensus in the ethnographic literature concerning the exact number and names of local ethnic groups. In 1974, José Manuel de Braga Dias includes eleven names in his list of Portuguese Guinea's groups: Baiotes, Balantas, Biafadas, Bijagos, Brames, Felupes, Mandingues, Mandjaques, Nalus, Papel, Peuls. In contrast, Tcherno Djaló (2012) lists twelve main groups (Baiotes, Balantas, Banhuns, Bijagós, Brames ou Mancanhas, Cassangas, Felupes, Fulas, Mandingas, Manjacos, Nalus, Pepeis), and eleven ethnic minorities (Bagas, Bambaras, Cobianas, Conháguis, Jacancas, Jaloncas, Landumas, Padjadincas, Quissincas, saracolés, Sossos).

[13] I employ the expression "Creole society" in the sense elucidated by Wilson Trajano Filho: "Broadly speaking, Creole society refers to the people born or raised in the fortified villages built on the river banks of the Guinean coast since the end on the sixteenth century. These are people of mixed ancestry with close and organic ties both with the African societies that surrounded the Creole settlements and with the Portuguese and Cape Verdeans who traded on the African coast or served in garrisons. Known in the specialized literature as Luso-Africans, they have developed a particular form of social organization and cultural system that combines elements of African and European traditions to produce a societal synthesis, a third entity that is neither African nor Portuguese." (Trajano Filho 2012: 158).

outcomes of their mediation work was Kriol, originally a trade language created as a linguistic code for allowing communication among people who spoke mutually unintelligible languages (Trajano Filho 2010:161). Later, Luso-African traders erected their own fortified villages (*praça* in Kriol, which today means town) where a new field of social relations emerged. Here, the *lançados* lived side by side with the *grumetes*, another group of social actors formed by African auxiliaries, seamen and longshoremen who, in adopting Luso-African ways, "acted as intermediaries of the intermediaries" (ibid: 164).

Therefore, over the course of the last centuries, the process of creolization in Guinea brought into contact two cultural traditions – European and African – with their distinct forms of social structure, ideas and practices, giving birth to "a third entity, a social synthesis that has historically acquired many forms" (ibid: 164). Its continuity over time is due to "the balance of forces between a weak and distant colonial power and a fragmented collection of traditional societies that were never able to act jointly" (ibid: 164). However, the "Creole society" described by Wilson Trajano Filho is less a native category than an anthropological abstraction, aimed at condensing multiple historical figures. Indeed, the set of Kriol expressions historically used to refer to this protean social group – such as *lançado*, *branku di terra* (native white) *Kriston* (Christian), *grumete* (seaman), *civilizado* (civilized), *burmedju* (red or mulatto), and *jagasidu* (mestizo) - share some of its attributes without providing comprehensive understanding of what Creole society is. In reality, due to its extreme social heterogeneity and internal stratification it cannot be defined as an African elite or a social class, nor is it used to refer to ethnic identity. Moreover, it cannot be described as an urban group, insofar as, despite having being historically associated with urban centres, its social reproduction has its roots in rural areas. In order to account for this synchronic and diachronic variability, Trajano Filho has coined the phrase "polymorphic creoledrom" (ibid: 165).

According to Trajano Filho, the idea of nation conveyed by the PAIGC since the mid-1950s was above all a Creole project, aimed at overcoming the Creoles' subordinate position within the colonial political structure[14]. If during the liberation war the PAIGC succeeded in

[14] Within the legal framework established by the Estatuto do Indigenato (1954) and earlier laws, the population living in Portuguese African colonies was divided into "civilized" (including Europeans and assimilated Africans) and "indigenas". In order to obtain the status of "assimilated" , inhabitants needed to meet a set of requirements, including speaking and writing in Portuguese, being Christian, having a paid job, etc. The natives of Cape Verde were authomatically considered assimilated. The category of assimilated corresponds approximaltey to the social notion of Creole, as employed by Trajano Filho. It is important to note that despite the legal equivalence between Europeans and assimilated (both included in the category of "civilized"), in

temporarily joining many members of indigenous societies into the nationalist goal, the latter still remains a Creole project. With the advent of the independent nation-state, long-standing mechanisms of creolization - such as exogamous matrimonial practices, the custom of fosterage, patronage, and trade networks - could no longer incorporate the mass of native soldiers who fought against the Portuguese, together with their relatives, who flocked to Bissau in the last decades. As Guinean towns rapidly expanded the Guinean postcolonial state, shaped as a hybrid mixture of European institutional forms and traditional African concepts of authority, revealed its limitations. Indeed, it has proved unable to develop efficient institutions which can integrate the mass of newcomers into the school system, the job market and the system of political participation. The result is the present gap between the patrimonial state and the social aspirations of the population, which engenders a profound sense of disappointment among most Guineans. According to the author, due to its small size, its inability to reproduce itself and its overall political failure, Creole society is probably going through a process of "decreolization" (ibid: 181). This means that it could simply disappear, or eventually metamorphize into new social form, based on the revitalization of the Western African ability to incorporate strangers, accommodate difference and create social connections.

Therefore, as I hope to have shown, the Guinean landscape has been marked by complexity and pluralism at various levels and throughout the course of its history. This heterogeneity and fluidity, involving the rural as well as the urban Guinean environment, is reflected in the religious sphere. As Ramon Sarró and Miguel de Barros point out, the region corresponding to present Guinea-Bissau was the site of a meeting of three religious frontiers (Sarró and De Barros forthcoming). The first is the African internal frontier, understood as the reproduction and mobility of indigenous groups, through segmentation and expansion (Kopytoff 1987). By occupying new lands, the agricultural or agro-pastoralist indigenous groups of Guinea-Bissau brought with them their religious universes. As Eve Crowley describes in her work on Mandjaco and other groups of the area (Crowley 2000; Crowley 1994), this expansion was associated with notions of "spiritual contracts", an idea shared by many societies that my interlocutors would define as "animistic". According to these

practice one's position in the colonial social pyramid was determined by racial distinctions. Within this framework, lower ranks were occupied by the indigenous masses, intermediate ranks by mestizo Luso-Africans, and higher ranks by Portuguese, regardless of the merit of each individual (Djaló 2012).

cosmologies, spirits (*irans* in Kriol) are the real owners of the place (*tchon*). Hence, when a human group arrives at a place, it has to "sign" a contract with the spirit who inhabits the land. Consequently, the firstcomers become the legitimate owners of the place (*donos do tchon*), and the late comers (*hóspedes*) have to ask their permission in order to settle and to have access to land (Temudo 2012). This oath to the local *iran* must be maintained through periodic libations and sacrifices, lest the land becomes ruined. In addition to this regular worship, individuals can occasionally ask a favour to a spirit of the place, which will be returned through a *torna-boka*, a ritual practice performed in a shrine (Sarró and De Barros forthcoming).

The second religious frontier is the Muslim frontier, expanding from the East since the thirteenth century. Among subsequent waves of Muslim migrants, traders and warriors, particularly important were the empires of Mande (which incorporated the north-eastern regions of Guinea-Bissau between the thirteenth and sixteenth century) Gabu (a former province of the Mande empire, which rose to prominence in the region in the sixteenth century), and Futa Jallon (which annexed the Gabu kingdom after a series of jihads in the nineteenth century). The descendants of these empires, Mandingoes and Fula respectively, still dispute control of the Muslim scene in present-day Guinea-Bissau. Despite its strength, however, the Muslim frontier has not yet reached the Western coast.

The third is the Catholic-Atlantic frontier, constituted by the Christian Creole society which emerged in coastal centres such as Farim, Geba, Bolama and Cacheu. The expansion of this frontier advanced along the commercial and social networks which existed between the Luso-African and Cape Verdean actors - who controlled and managed the Atlantic trade - and the hinterland groups (Brooks 2003). As observed by Sarró and de Barros, one of the sites in which the importance of Catholicism in the constitution of the Creole community is most visible is the very Creole concept for the person: *pekadur* (literally, "sinner"). Significantly, this term is used today by all Guineans, independently of their religious affiliation.

As pointed out by many observers, despite its early presence and its alliance with the Portuguese colonial power (see chapter 1), Catholic missionary action remained essentially limited to the *praças* (Gonçalves 1960; Djaló 2012). Indeed, its success in rural areas was

very limited, if compared with the impact of Islam in the interior of the country[15]. According to Sarró and de Barros, the permanence of a large "animistic" block still unconverted by Muslims and Christians can be ascribed to the pluralist nature of the Guinean "religious ecosystem". In their view, rather than a romantic view of cultural resistance, a regional model of religious interaction "would probably help us understand better the advantages, for all the actors involved, in keeping different cosmological understandings coexisting, each in its own 'enclave', and why in certain zones some members of the local community converted to a world religion while others did not" (Sarró and De Barros forthcoming:4). Moreover, the existence of "buffer areas", such as the zone of Oio along the Geba River, where agents of both world religions have been free to go in search of souls to be converted, reveals the crucial role of compromise in the religious geography of Guinea-Bissau. Indeed, a history of social and religious encounters created "a hyper-complex cultural grid full of mediations and negotiations" (Sarró and De Barros forthcoming:5). This "spirit of compromise", expressed in Portuguese by the concept of *convivência* (companionship, familiarity), is present both in the cosmopolitan *praças* and in the most remote *tabancas*, taking the form of religious syncretism and dualism, as well as compartmentalized respect for other religions. It also underlies the ecumenical efforts of the last fifteen years, when religious authorities of different confessions (namely Islamic, Catholic and Evangelic) worked together as mediators during political crises[16].

Therefore Guinea-Bissau, as well as the wider Upper Guinea Coast, has historically been a complex context, open to-change in many respects, where "managing multiple identities and mastering the arts of ambiguity has been part and parcel of what it is to be a person" (Sarró and De Barros forthcoming:13). This is true both in multi-ethnic rural villages and in Creole urban milieus, despite the differences between these two social spaces. It was in this tolerant and plural context that my interlocutors, or their forefathers, decided to abandon their former religion, to be born again and adopt the Evangelical faith. The reasons for and motivations behind their choice will be the subject of the following pages.

[15] As reported by Fernando Luís Machado (2002), in 1979 35% of the Guinean population was Muslim, 60% practiced indigenous religions and 5% was Christian. At that time, the Christian milieu was mainly constituted of Catholics, as the Evangelical community hardly reached two thousand people (see chapter 1).

[16] In this respect, in addition to the role of religious leaders in the civil war of 1998-99 (see chapter 1), one could highlight the importance of radio and TV channels as stages for the promotion of ecumenism in the public sphere (Sarró and de Barros forthcoming).

Narratives of conversion

Before analysing my interviews, I would like to briefly introduce the specific meaning of conversion in the Evangelical world. According to the Oxford Dictionary, the primary meaning of "conversion" is "the act or process of changing something from one form, use or system to another"[17]. Only as a secondary meaning is conversion described as "the process or experience of changing your religion or beliefs". Generally, the anthropological literature has focused on this second and narrower sense of conversion, understanding it as "the process by which the primary religious identification of a people changes" (Peel 1977:108). According to this perspective, the subject of religious change can be an individual or, more often, a social group. In contrast, my interlocutors refer to a notion of conversion which has its roots in Christian theology, one that is closer to the first and broader sense of the term: the transformation or passage from one state to another. In the Bible, the word "conversion" means a change aimed at returning to God, that is, a transformation which is also renewal and return (Bonanate 1994). The Christian category of conversion is generally traced back to the Letters of Paul: here the term acquires an additional nuance, as the moral transformation that Christian faith demands is not only personal but also cultural. Paul, commonly regarded as the individual who invented Christian universalism, was concerned with the proclamation of the Gospel in the pagan world. Accordingly, some of the crucial topics in his Letters are the necessity of abandoning one's former identity, the priority of faith over law, and the problem of how to deal with Judaic practices, especially circumcision. Thus, as observed by Joel Robbins, "with the arguments it brought to [its] crucial encounter with Judaism embedded in its canonical doctrine, […] Christianity always comes to new situations equipped with a set of arguments for why people need to throw over an inadequate traditional moral system in favour of the new one it can provide" (Robbins 2004:319). However, different Christian traditions have developed their own version of conversion over time. Within Catholicism, conversion is associated with the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and penance: with baptism the believer receives the remission of original sin; with confirmation he confirms the baptismal vows made on his behalf by his parents; with penance he confesses the sins he

[17] http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/conversion

committed after baptism, is absolved by an ordained minister, and makes an act of penance. Historically Protestantism also broadly maintains that the sacrament of baptism erases original sin. Some Protestant churches, such as the Baptist church, practice the baptism of adults, placing more emphasis on the personal and conscious choice of the believer. Churches in the revivalist tradition, which have their origins in Methodism and the holiness movement, preach the doctrine of sanctification, according to which every Chrsitian should undergo a spiritual experience subsequent to conversion, entailing salvation by faith and freedom from sin. Besides conversion and sanctification, the Pentecostal churches add a third stage of Christian perfection: the baptism of the Holy Spirit usually evidenced by speaking in tongues[18]. Understanding conversion as a process that involves a series of successive stages, the revivalist tradition returns to the biblical meaning of conversion, which is twofold: one the one hand, it concerns an inner repentance; on the other, it recalls the idea of a movement, a route, a path to be followed. As pointed out by Ruth Marshall, "conversion, becoming Born-Again, is not simply a free act of will […]. Becoming Born-Again is an event of rupture, but *being* Born-Again is an ongoing existential project, not a state acquired once and for all, a process that is never fully achieved and always runs the risk of being compromised" (Marshall 2009:131). Hence the centrality of the notion of "backsliding" and the perpetual possibility of "losing one's salvation". As I observed in the first chapter, the main Evangelical churches in Guinea-Bissau belong to this latter branch of Christianity, combining Baptist, Methodist and Pentecostal influences. Most of them practice baptism of adults, which is generally performed during adolescence. However, baptism is generally conceived as an outward sign of conversion, representing the entry into the community of believers. The actual conversion is primarily an inward event, which has to be followed by a profession of faith, which consists of accepting Christ as one's saviour in front of one or more believers.

[18] The "baptism of the Holy Spirit" is the moment when the believer accepts Christ, and the Holy Spirit begins to dwell in his person. A clear sign of this event is the "glossolalia", or "speaking in tongues", which for the early Pentecostalism is the ability to speak properly, without previous learning, in a known human language. The most recent groups provide a broader interpretation, including all those phenomena ranging from speaking in an unknown language to pronounce verbal declamations, often accompanied by a state of emotional and religious excitement, who express the desire to achieve a direct communication with God that exceeds the limits of verbal language. The doctrine of glossolalia finds its theological ground in the Gospel episode of Pentecost. On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit's gifts, or charismas - among them, as well as the ability to speak in tongues, also prophecy, healing and miracles - are offered to the apostles and to the whole crowd. If most of the early Pentecostal denominations believe in speaking in tongues as the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the more recent charismatic groups insist more on the work of the Holy Spirit through His gifts, in the course of people's lives.

This can occur in childhood, as in the case of people who were born into Evangelical families, or in adulthood, for people who previously belonged to another religion. Some of the churches present in Guinea-Bissau preach the doctrine of the baptism of the Spirit, and many Guinean believers speak in tongues. However, neither the profession of faith, nor baptism in water, nor baptism of the Holy Spirit ensures permanent salvation: Satan is always around the corner, ready to drive the believer into sinful behaviour and back to traditional practices, as revealed by the life story of Pastor Quintino, as well as by many others I heard.

Over the course of my fieldwork, I collected twenty-four life story interviews, sixteen in Lisbon and eight in Bissau. All the people I asked to tell their biography talked about their conversion. Some of them also referred to the conversion of their parents or grandparents. Hence, including the narratives told in the first person as well as those referring to earlier generations, I analysed thirty-six conversion histories. At first, I did not find the topic of conversion particularly relevant to my research. Out of twenty-four Guinean believers who told their biographies, eleven were born into a Protestant family and accepted Jesus Christ in their childhood. The others converted at an older age, leaving their previous religion, which in the main was traditional or Catholic. In these cases, the motivations for switching to Christianity were quite disparate, ranging from contact with Evangelic missionaries, the influence of friends, relatives and neighbours, the wish to be healed from a disease, or the fear of being bewitched. In most cases, it was a mixture of reasons. At first glance, then, it was difficult to identify a general trend.

Moreover, the meaning of "conversion" held by my interlocutors was often far from my own view. For me, conversion was a process by which a person or group adheres to a new religion I was certainly influenced by my anthropology lectures, which mostly associated conversion with religious change, understanding it as a social and historical process rather than a spiritual and existential one. For my respondents, conversion was primarily, *stricto sensu*, the decision to accept Jesus Christ. Secondly, in a broader sense, it was a long-term process, which could include different stages and temporary drifts, as well as more serious lapses. In this sense, conversion was less an event than a process, less an irreversible turn than a daily effort to "walk on the right path". On the one hand, even a child who received a Christian education was expected to "convert" (first meaning), that is, accept Jesus on his or her own, in front of one or more witnesses. On the other hand, this first act was considered as

the prelude of a series of stages (second meaning), including baptism in water, the baptism of the Holy Spirit (in the case of Pentecostal believers), and possibly vocation and the consecration (in the case of Pastors or church leaders). Each of these events was conceived as a personal choice, experienced within the person, which had to be presented to the community of believers as well. Thus, whereas my notion of conversion hinged upon a change from one religious identity to another, their view was much more complex, focusing on the personal experience of the encounter with God, regardless of one's previous faith. In this sense, even an Evangelic believer could "convert", if he or she had not experienced the true Gospel in his or her heart, or if he or she was living a sinful life. In this regard, the story of Pastor Quintino, who converted twice, is particularly significant.

In the case of believers who converted in their childhood, it mostly occurred during a Sunday school class. The interviewees highlighted the emotional and physical feelings they felt, as well as the element of personal choice:

> Conversion is personal; the person has to demonstrate her faith. I remember once my aunt, [...] went from Bissau to Bolama, to give classes of Good News, to teach people, children, biblical stories. It was in one of those classes of Good News that I converted, with my aunt who later became very important for my revival, to revive my faith, when I was already in Bissau. My conversion was in Bolama, I was five or six years old. [...] There in Guinea, Good News is the name given to a type of evangelistic campaign [...]. And it was in this class that I felt that God called me to give my life to Him. [...] It was so real, so real, it was an experience. We were in a group of six or seven young children, still in the pre-school. My aunt, missionary Benvinda, preached, she made figures with puppets. [...] She had a very strong pedagogy; she was a woman of God. Then, she asked who wanted to give her life to Christ. And then, we presented ourselves. She prayed and said we'd feel a twist in our heart, and I felt. [...] I felt this special touch, a touch that is not the normal pulse beat. [...] This was my conversion. Later we went to Bissau, we stopped attending church because we had no churches close to our place, and she returned to be very important in my Christian faith, because she always prayed with me, she was investing in me, until I went back to church again and never left. (Sara)

> [My parents] educated me in the Word of God. And when I was seven years old, I decided by myself in the church. When they asked if there was someone who wanted to accept Jesus, I said I wanted to. Because it is obvious that being a child of Christian parents did not mean I was a believer, no. I decided on my own to accept Jesus as my only saviour [...]. When we say that someone has accepted Jesus, it is the person herself who recognizes that Jesus died because of her sins. It is a way to recognize [one's own sins], to resign to His will and to give back to the old things that people used to do in order to do things that we know that Jesus commanded to be practiced. So this is the rule: those who accept Jesus with their own mouths, by saying "I accept Jesus as my only saviour, I recognize that he died in my place, His blood washed my sins away", then Jesus will write their names in the book of life [...]. A person can choose the words but there are words that are the most important, which is the statement: "I know that Jesus died for me, I ask forgiveness of my sins". In fact, the Bible says that all of us have sinned. When you sin, you are far from the glory of God. In order to have access, you need to ask forgiveness of your sins. You can use your words, but there are some key words. When these words are missing, [...] another person can help, she talks, and the person who wants to accept Jesus will repeat. [...] So, on this ground I accepted Jesus at the age of seven. (Jonas)

As already described, out of the twenty-four individuals interviewed, eleven received a Christian education and converted in childhood, while thirteen converted at an older age. Among those who converted from a different religion, eight had an "animist" background, four were Catholic, and only one was Muslim. This small sample appears to confirm the opinion shared by many Evangelical leaders that most new converts are from an animistic or, to a lesser extent, Catholic background. It is worth noting that, from a Protestant point of view, many Catholic Guineans are not real Christians, as they often "indulge" in traditional practices, such as life cycle rituals (namely marriages and funerals), as well as *torna boka* (see above). This view is confirmed by the academic literature on Creole Catholicism, which highlights its dualistic and syncretised nature (Trajano Filho 2010; Djaló 2012; Sarró and De Barros forthcoming). Religious leaders and academic scholars also concur in acknowledging the difficulty of Evangelical churches in reaching Muslim groups (Costa Dias 1999).

Nonetheless, Evangelicals stress the progress that has been made in recent years, with the opening of missions in the predominantly Muslim eastern zone of the country, where some conversions are starting to occur.

Therefore, many of my interlocutors were born into Protestant families, and those who converted from another religion told how they were driven by diverse motivations. What did this mean? What was the meaning of conversion for these people? Why did they adopt Evangelical Christianity, embracing a religion which came from far away and was brought by white foreign missionaries, a faith which was shared by a small minority in their country? Why did they undergo such a radical transformation? In order to find the means of answering these questions, I had to go deeper in my analysis of the interviews.

When I asked my interlocutors to talk about their past, I also encouraged them to recall their family stories. That is how I elicited some interesting information about the early converts amongst their kin. Later, when I was analysing these interviews, I opted to organize the conversion narratives chronologically, regardless of whether they were told in the first or third person. In this manner, I obtained thirty-six stories, divided into four generations: those who converted in the 1940-50s (first generation); those who converted in the 1960-70s (second generation); those who converted in the 1980-90s (third generation); and those who converted after 2000 (fourth generation).

Who were these people? Firstly, it must be said that most of my interlocutors were either religious leaders or active members of their congregations. This fact is due to the way I contacted them. As is quite common in anthropological research, I employed a snowball method, recruiting the subjects of my investigation from among their own social networks. One of the first people I met was Eliseu Gomes, the minister of the Missão Evangélica Lusófona, the congregation that was to become my primary case-study (see chapters 4-5). Pastor Eliseu soon became my ‘gate-keeper’, thus exerting a certain degree of discretion in selecting the people with whom I subsequently came in contact. As a result, my research turned to be largely ‘church-based’, reproducing the perspective of the most active members of the congregation, and neglecting to a considerable extent the point of view of more marginal believers. In addition, as the chief goal which motivated my stay in Bissau was the reconstruction of the history of the Guinean Evangelical community, my interlocutors were among the oldest and more influent Evangelical leaders. Hence my analysis overlooks the

point of view of those believers who occupy a marginal position within the Guinean Evangelical world, both at home and in the diaspora, and is closer to a perspective which can be called "hegemonic" within that context.

Secondly, in out of thirty-six stories, seventeen converts were women and nineteen were men. Obviously, due to the small size of the sample, my analysis does not have any statistical value and the male component is probably over-represented with respect to the gender composition of the Evangelical Guinean community. This figure may be ascribed to the prevalence of leaders among my interlocutors. In fact, within Guinean congregations, likewise in other African Evangelical contexts, the church leadership is male-dominated, despite an apparent female preponderance in the middle and low ranks of the congregations. As I will show in the next chapters, the female element is preponderant in MEL, as well as in most congregations I visited over the course of my fieldwork. In this regard, it is worth recalling that the missionary who first brought the Gospel in Guinea-Bissau was Bessie Fricker, a young unmarried woman (see chapter 1), and that women were significant among the first cohort of Evangelical missionaries[19]. As well, according to oral history, the first Guinean convert was a woman called Guilhermina Barbosa[20]. Moreover, despite the limited number of women in the highest ranks of the Guinean Evangelical hierarchy, women's departments and associations are among the most active and numerous groups in the churches.

Thirdly, the protagonists of the stories are quite heterogeneous with regard to their social and ethnic background. Out of thirty-six, twelve were Papel, twelve were of mixed origin, five were Balanta, five were Bijagó, one was Mandjako and one was Mancanha. Twenty-two converted in an urban context, and fourteen in a village. At the moment of conversion, among the latter group, one belonged to a trader family, one was the son of civil servants, and the rest were employed in agriculture and other traditional activities. Among those who were living in town (whether in Bissau or Bolama) ten were students, five belonged to the urban underclass, five were civil servants, one was a trader and one was a soldier. Most of these people belonged to families who sought upward social mobility by moving to Bissau (and later to Lisbon), and also sought to invest in their children's education.

[19] Among the earliest Protestant missionaries in Guinea-Bissau, eighteen out of twenty-nine were women (Lima 2007:63).
[20] This information was confirmed by Ernesto Lima (2007).

This tendency is evidenced by the fact that most first generation converts, who converted in the 1940-50s, accepted Christ in a rural context, whereas the following generations chiefly converted in urban areas. In this respect, it is worth noting that most interviewees lived in the Bairro Caracol neighbourhood before moving from Bissau to Lisbon. Furthermore, as well as Pastor Quintino and Pastor Eliseu, many Evangelical Guineans living in Lisbon were ex-members of the Igreja de Belém, the main church in the area and one of the oldest and largest congregations in Guinea (see chapter 1). The Bairro Caracol is also the place where the Missão Evangélica has its locales, and is an area where the Protestant community has been conspicuous since the early years of its presence in Guinea.

Finally, a further element which characterizes the identities of my interlocutors is their family names. In an article which appeared in the *Soronda* journal, George Brooks (1990) lists the principal families of the Guinean Creole elite. Significantly, most of the last names of my interviewees are included in this list[21]. This fact does not mean that they belonged to elite families. Actually, as pointed out by Trajano Filho, the Guinean Creole society cannot be defined as an elite group, due to its heterogeneity and complex articulation with African traditional societies. Moreover, name-giving has been a long-standing practice commonly used by Creole families to strengthen their bonds with their African adherents (Trajano Filho 2010). Therefore, the recurrence of Creole names can be ascribed to the integration of these people within Creole patronage networks.

On the grounds of these observations it can be argued that most of the people interviewed were strongly connected in one way or another with Creole society, principally established in Bissau and in other major urban areas. They appeared to belong to the mass of Guineans that flowed to Bissau after Independence, looking for upward mobility through work and education, but in reality experiencing social immobility due to the crisis that hit the country over the recent decades. It was exactly in the aftermath of this economic and political crisis – which had particularly dramatic effects on the urban middle class - that many of my interlocutors decided to move to Lisbon in search of a better life.

As I reconstructed the story of this group of early believers who led their families to the Gospel, redeeming, in their view, all their progeny from original sin, some common elements began to emerge. A common thread seemed to unite the original motivations behind

[21] Among others, eight Gomes, five Barbosa, three Lopes, two Rodrigues, and two Silva.

their conversions, despite the heterogeneity of their social and ethnic backgrounds. Once, a Balanta friend told me: "Papels are very mysterious". We were speaking of another friend, a Papel actually. When I asked her to clarify her statement, she said that Papels are especially concerned with spirits and "occult things". I objected that Angelina (as I will call her) was Evangelical, and she insisted: "It is exactly because they live in fear of the spirits of the dead, that many Papel go to the Gospel, in the hope of getting rid of their fear". This conversation came to my mind while I was examining the interviews. Although it certainly reflected an ethnocentric bias (indeed, many Guineans would probably assign the same "mysteriousness" to the Balantas) this interpretation resounded with many of the conversion narratives I heard, including the testimonies given in Sunday worship, as well as my own interviews.

Returning to my stories, out of thirty-six cases, ten believers had an Evangelical education, and twenty-six converted from another religion. Among the latter group, in fourteen cases the converts were driven by motivations that were in one way or another connected to a fear of mystical attacks. Most people told stories about infertility, miscarriages, an inexplicable series of unfortunate events, apparently incurable diseases. Within local aetiology, all these situations were generally associated with sorcery or spiritual sanctions enacted by supernatural beings (such as *iran* or ancestors) due the failure to perform a specific traditional ritual. In her book *Tired of wiping. Mother Love, Child Death, and Poverty in Guinea-Bissau*, Jónína Einersdóttir (2005) describes how, within traditional Papel cosmology, infertility, miscarriages and the consecutive death of new-borns are commonly associated with sorcery. In this view, all such events are ascribed to the action of an envious relative – often a woman belonging to the same lineage of the victim – who attacks a rival by hindering her reproductive power with the help of a ritual specialist. Significantly, many women (although not only women) who appeared in the interviews – either the narrator herself, or her mother or grand-mother –were suffering from one of these afflictions at the moment of their transition to Christianity. Yet, according to a recurrent scheme, after their conversion they would have been blessed with many children. Often, the speaker was the first child born after conversion: a "child of God" in every sense.

Daniel is a Papel. He was the first among those interviewed to migrate to Lisbon, in the late 1980s. He is now in his fifties and works in a car factory. In the meantime, he is studying economics, and dreams of going back to Bissau. His wife is a chemist, and together

they are planning to open a pharmacy in Bissau in the near future. He did not receive an Evangelical education because his parents were animists when he was born. His father was the first of the family to convert in the late 1960s, and shortly after Daniel followed his example, at the age of twelve.

> My father converted because... in Guinea, actually in Africa, it's not like in Europe. In Europe people talk of the devil, but a European […] have no idea of the effect of the devil. I've never seen the devil, as well as I've never seen God, but I know he exists, and has tremendous power. And yet there is another, who is God, who has more power than the devil. The devil exists, he really exists. Then my father [...] had five brothers, he was the youngest. [...] My uncle told me once: [...] "Even myself, his oldest brother, sometimes I envied him. Because your father had a reputation that went beyond..." So, there are these things of the devil, and he suddenly became ill, but seriously. He was about to die. It was my uncle who advised him to go to church, although he hated the church. Nobody in my family was Christian, but he said: "You know, as you're sick, you have to go to church". My father went, and converted. Converted, and God healed him. [...] It was a malignant disease, someone had made sorcery against him, because I had a lot of fame [...].In Guinea, formerly, there was a kind of wrestling, and my father was one of the best at it. It's like a sport. There was also a traditional dance. My father was good at it too. And moreover my dad... he was not that very tall but he had so much strength… [...] and he was very famous. Even with women. [...] He had three children, the first died after birth, the second exactly the same thing, and then I was born a twin, and the other died. So they led me to a region, those traditional things… [...] They did the ceremony and they were taking care of me. I went back with my parents, but I regularly had to go there, in the north of the country, to do all the ceremonies. I do not know specifically where, but I know it was very far away, in the land of the Balanta tribe. When they did that ceremony, for example, I could not cut my hair. To cut my hair, it had to be with a glass bottle. [...] That was at least until I was five years old. [...] Then, after my father's illness, he converted, which was I suppose in 1968 or '69. I was ten, at that time. [...]

And then I converted in 1971. I went to that ceremony, the *fanado*, which is circumcision, in 1970 [...]. We stayed in the woods during one month. [...] My father was already a Christian; it was my uncle who took me there [...]. I think my father knew, he should not allow, but as he was a new Christian... maybe he didn't react, and my uncle took me. [At that time my father was the only Christian in the family], he only had a cousin who was already Christian. Then when I left this place, in 1971, I converted. I converted because… as I was studying in a private primary school near the church, [...] in the intervals we always went to watch [the classes of evangelization]. It was there that I converted. [...] Only my father was going to church at the time. There was a time that my mother got very sick too. I usually say to her: "You can convert, but there are many forms of conversion". Someone is chasing me, the devil is behind me, I'm afraid, and so I can convert me, because I'm running away from someone. But to really convert, you have to know: "I am a sinner. I need to give my life to Jesus". Now, if I go there because I have something else I need to resolve, because someone is behind me, it is not... I can even get it. Like my mother, for example, she went [to church] because she was sick, she was told: "You must go there!" She was, and she got rid. But then she left […].

Before I converted, I was afraid. There are ceremonies… there are things that are hard to explain to a European. These are things that only Africans do [...]. And I was afraid. But when I converted, I felt freed from fear. Although I was a child, I felt free of it. There are places that my colleagues who were not believers, they were afraid to go there. I could go there at will, without fear. Or I could do things without fear, my colleagues lacked the courage. [...] One example: in fruit season (mangoes, cashew), sometimes there are trees in the passageway. For example, a person has a mango tree there in the way. It is a tree that bears much fruit. And when people go, they take. So [...] this person will get a red blanket, a jar and a bit of cane rum in a bottle, and leave it there. It's just to make it visible, no one will take over, everyone is afraid to take anything there. But I could draw at will; I had no fear of that [...].

As a child, I had not engaged in traditional things. But I remember that moment: the fear of doing it, to go there, it completely disappeared. [...] I heard my father talking at home, to evangelize the cousins, to tell his life: "I was afraid of it, I

> was afraid of that..." [...] When he converted one evening at church, the next day in the morning he said to his cousins: "Ah, if I was tied, if I was running and I found a refuge, so what am I waiting? I will also take all my people there!" It was the first thing I heard my father saying to his cousins. But I did not realize at the time, only later I came to realize what he'd meant by that. [...] But this does not mean that I took the time to think to that. [...] I heard it at home; I got out and forgot [...]. Only later, in school I heard the Good News [...]. I was a teenager. With the call, I decided to convert.

Jonas, in his forties, is a Bijagó. He lives in the outskirt of Lisbon, where he arrived from Bissau in 2001. Since his arrival, he has worked in construction. He was born in the isle of Uno (Bijagó), from Christian parents. At the time of his birth, in the 1970s, his *tabanca* was almost entirely Christian, whereas the other settlements in the isle were mostly animistic. As in Uno there was only a primary school, he had to go to Bubaque (a larger centre in the Bijagós) and then to Bissau, in order to continue his studies, as all his brothers and sister did. After finishing his studies, he worked in the army for few years, and then in a non-governmental organizationas professor of physical education and sport. In 2001, shortly after the civil war, he was invited in Lisbon to attend an international cooperation meeting, and he decided to stay. Whereas he converted in his childhood, his parents, as well as many of their neighbours from the same generation, accepted Jesus at an older age. The story of the Christian village of Ancarabe is extremely relevant to understanding why people from an animistic context should decide to adopt Evangelical Christianity.

> My parents were already Evangelical believers when I was born. But to my knowledge, they only accepted Jesus in their thirties, before the birth of their first child. After marrying, they sought to have children and they could not, they sailed throughout the islands making ceremonies, to see if they could have a child. [...] At the time they heard the Word of God they were in that need, and could not have children. [...] Then, when they accepted Jesus as saviour, they had their first child. But as I said I was educated when they were already believers, they educated me in teaching the Gospel. [...]

A notable thing is that in the village when I grew up, there were people who were not children of the village. You see how the devil can do things? In those villages where there were no believers, the children were born and died shortly after, someone tried to get pregnant and could not, there was plenty of infertility, and this was assumed to be an evil work, which is possible, people even died[22]. As our population was already an Evangelical settlement, the following happened: when the person got pregnant, if she had already lost one, two, three pregnancies, their relatives soon brought her to our village. They were brought, they stood there, some could give birth, but when they went back, they left the child in our village. I have three colleagues of my generation who grew up with me, who are not from our village, but actually they are now, because their mothers left them there, they grew up there, some are men and married there, and stayed there. [...]

Why? Because we are believers, we prayed and the child was protected, and nobody could hurt him/her in our village. They understood that it was the devil that was killing the children, and it could be. Why? Because when they came to our village, it did not die. The woman was going back to her husband, to her house. But the child remained there, and many children took advantage of that, they went to school and completed their studies, for staying in our community. By contrast, if they had been in their village, it would have been chaos. [...]

Ambra, there was plenty of infertility; there are people who lost five or six children. They gave birth, the child lived until four or five years of age, and after he died. Another came, six-seven years, and died. But they did not stop having children. Their refuge was: as she got pregnant, she came soon to Ancarabe. She came to Ancarabe, she gave birth, she took the child in church and said: "This is your son!" People prayed powerfully, and the child stayed alive. They were not just one or two or

[22] Jonas' narrative needs to be understood against the background of Bijagó conceptions about death, childhood and birth. In her book on Bijagó emotions, Chiara Pussetti (2005) states that a newborn's death is seldom mourned in the Bijagós, as young babies are not considered social persons, and their soul could come back to life through the womb of the same mother, or another woman of the lineage. This apparent indifference is ascribed by the author to a "political economy" of emotions, associated with high child mortality (Scheper-Hughes 1992). Nonetheless, Pussetti also observes that a sequence of miscarriages and child deaths would be commonly interpreted as a sign of misfortune, often attributed to a witchcraft attack motivated by the envy of close relatives. Significantly, many interlocutors of the author describe having had similar experiences: in order to run away from the threatening envy of their kin they moved from their village, just as the pregnant women in Jonas' story.

three or four, there were many who sought refuge. The person was sick? Instead of rushing to the hospital, they put him on their shoulder and ran to Ancarabe. People prayed, and they were soon healed. I do not doubt the existence of God. Because I saw things happening that only God could have done.

However, I have many [relatives who did not convert]. Relations remained firm, [...] the relationship between believers and nonbeliever kin was pretty solid, it was not a problem. Us, because we are believers, we now have another vision. For example, if you see the village where I grew up, 90% of my generation went to school. And about 80% completed secondary school. If you see in another community where no one is a believer, you'll see that 60% is going to school, and maybe only 10 or 20% is able to conclude their studies. [...] For us, when we were evangelized by the light of God's Word, we had the notion, from living with European people who evangelized us, as the school in Europe is so important. The teachings they gave also taught the importance of school. And our parents accepted. A little story of how my studies were a sacrifice: when there was a holyday week in Bissau, I had to go to the Bijagós islands and take anything, such as rice, to sell in order to support my studies. When I was thirteen or fourteen, I already started to support myself. My dad said: “Do this, to support your studies”. So these people taught us the importance of school, and insisted on sending us to school. It was difficult, because as I said my father had five children but there were parents who had twelve. People there live from agriculture. To farm a field you must have human resources, you need people. And of course, parents had children in order to support, to help them. So it was on that basis that we had more opportunities to go to school than the other communities. It is because of the Gospel; we had another mentality. There were missionaries who had to take the children from our parents to live with them, people moved to Bubaque with them, to Bissau with them, and studied.

[In my village there were] English, Scottish missionaries, some were American. Of course they arrived and were able to adapt to the culture there. People ate together; they went there and shared food with us. They identified with our culture, and were able to actually implant the Word, as well as the mentality to go to school.

In many of the narratives I collected, two main elements seem to emerge. One is the importance of education, individual autonomy and personal development, which is pointed out as an outcome and an advantage of conversion. Moreover, education is explicitly associated with a "modern" and "European" mind-set, being one of the crucial aspects of the "modern person". The importance assigned to schooling, in addition, is an element that Evangelical narratives have in common with another public discourse about modernity that was emerging in those years in Guinea-Bissau: the developmentist discourse of Amílcar Cabral and the nationalist movement. These issues will be analysed in depth in chapter 4.

The second motivation for conversion that emerges from the analysis of these narratives is the fear to be the victim of an evil attack, generally arising in connection with unfortunate events, such as infertility, miscarriages or apparently incurable diseases. As I have observed, within local aetiology all these situations are generally associated with sorcery or spiritual punishment, the former enacted by human enemies driven by envy, the latter exerted by supernatural beings (such as *iran* or ancestors) in retaliation for failure to perform a specific traditional ritual. Hence, according to a recurrent pattern, many believers would have converted in order to get free from occult threats, and to be able of living without fear.

The idea of "nefarious ties" resounds with vernacular notions about sorcery. For instance, as observed by Chiara Pussetti, in Bijagó language the concept of sorcery - as an action executed by a person who acquired the techniques and knowledge needed to pursue an invisible attack to a victim - is expressed by the word *kotratrakó*. Belonging to the lexical family *–ratr* (which includes the verb *n'oratr*, meaning "to hang, to tie, to suspend" but also "to be prohibited, sacred, forbidden"), *kotratrakó* could be translated as "tying medicines, doing nefarious interlacements to attack the victim". By knotting the name of the intended victim, the *omedok* (sorcerer) captures his or her soul. This node acts on social and family ties, and can be tied or loose in order to unite what should be separated and vice versa (Pussetti 2005:119).

The fear to be victim of sorcery is clearly visible in the story of Daniel's father, who was thought to be afflicted by a malignant disease "because he had a lot of fame". However, within local aetiology misfortune is not only interpreted as the outcome of sorcery. In addition, affliction may be ascribed to the failure to perform a ceremony required by *iran* or ancestral spirits. Candinha, a Catholic Papel woman living in Lisbon once told me:

> We Africans do not live a long time, because of all those ceremonies. For example, your mother had to do a ceremony because of that nut which was in her body, she did not made it and died for that. And you do not even know. You stay with that thing, you should do a ceremony but you don't know it, because your mother didn't tell you, and the disease passed to you. You'll get sick and do not even know why. Sometimes it is your grandmother or great-grandmother, they died without ceremony, and the disease is transmitted to all their descendants. Africans get sick more [than Europeans], because of this rubbish. […] But my nephew [who is Evangelical], is no longer in it, she is already in another world.

Then, the woman told me that she had the intension to switch to the Evangelical faith, but only after having collected the money necessary to perform a ceremony in Guinea-Bissau.

In my opinion, the fear of the "occult" should not be understood as the proof of a "fake" or "instrumental" conversion, or the symptom of the permanence of local beliefs beneath the veneer of Christian adherence. In this respect, I agree with Joel Robbins when he warns against those approaches which question the sincerity of non-Western people who left traditional religions to switch to Christianity, or which give such a syncretised representation of Christianity as to make it seem "nothing more than traditional religion tricked up in new clothes" (Robbins 2004). I also agree with Ruth Marshall, when she contests those analyses which, drawing on Mbembe's figure of the "pagan spirit" (Mbembe 1988), maintain the endurance of traditional beliefs among Africans Christians, as a form of resistance to Western worldviews, "even unconsciously, or despite themselves" (Marshall 2009:25).

Actually, whatever the initial motivation, the resolution in standing firm in faith and in the principles of the Gospel is a further step, which requires an even greater conviction. Accordingly, many people who accepted the Gospel later dropped out the church, as it still continues to happen. Similarly to the Tamatavian women studied by Jennifer Cole (2010), Guinean believers may have entered the church with practical goals and aspirations which are continuous with those of their non-believer relatives and neighbours, but if they stay they radically reconfigure their worldviews. Within this different logic, a wide category of entities and events (such as spirits of ancestors, supernatural beings and sorcery) are related to the action of the devil. As many narratives showed, the very existence of these invisible beings is

far from being denied. Nonetheless, believers know that God has much more power than the devil: "God is a shield against all types of threats", as Evangelical pastors use to declare. Hence, Evangelical membership leads the new converts to a radical reconfiguration of their cosmological categories. To quote the words of Candinha, "They are no longer in it; they are already in another world".

At the same time, conversion does not necessarily imply commitment. As in the case of Daniel's mother, as well as the pregnant women in the island of Uno, many people can drop-out for many reasons: they may not find what they expected; they may have no more motivation to continue; after their problem is solved; they may yield to social pressures of their non-Christian relatives. When they do stay, it is because they have undergone a radical transformation, resulting in a reinterpretation of their practical problems against the background of a new system of categories and values. In fact, rather than resulting in syncretised forms of religious practice, the experience of Evangelical conversion tends to produce new worldviews and new conceptions of personhood and morality, as well as new religious communities. Within this new logic, as Quintino's story demonstrates, a wide category of entities and events (such as the action of spirits of ancestors and supernatural beings, as well as sorcery) are related to the action of the devil, but their very existence is far from being denied. At the same time, this personal transformation is not irreversible, as revealed in the recurrence of the notion of *desvio* (in Portuguese: switch or diversion): backsliding is a permanent possibility, even for the most faithful believer. Ideally, the choice to join an Evangelical church implies a personal rejection of ancestral practices. Although this does not necessarily mean the break of all relationships with one's old community and family, the prohibition of involvement in traditional rituals can produce fatal tensions between the new converts and their families. As evidenced in the narratives I reported, despite the low level of conflict between believers and non-believers on a daily basis, this tension may rise during key events in family life. The primary sites for the emergence of tensions between Evangelical and non-Evangelical branches of Guinean lineages are life-cycle rituals, such as marriages and funerals. Many of my interlocutors admitted to have temporarily abandoned Christ's path when they were personally involved in such key events, such as circumcision rituals, marriages, and especially the death of their parents. In all these cases, my interlocutors were plunged into an inner conflict between two distinct moral logics: on the one hand, the

adherence to Christian morality; on the other, the loyalty to kinship ties. In this sense, conversion should not be represented as a once and for all transformation, despite the recurrence of an imaginary of rupture in the narratives emerging from testimonies and sermons. Rather, it can be described as the entry into a dimension wherein the fluctuation between two distinct moral (and cognitive) logics is always on the horizon, as in the case of the Urapmin described by Joel Robbins (2004).

In order to understand the intensity of this "moral torment" (Robbins 2004), it is worth highlighting the centrality of the ancestors worship among many Guinean ethnic groups, especially those who belong to what Sarró and de Barros call the "animistic frontier" (Sarró and De Barros forthcoming). In the case of the Papel group, Clara Saraiva has illustrated the importance of practices and beliefs associated with the world of the dead in traditional life. As she notes, "the ancestors shrines are the primary places where the relation with the after-world is established" (Saraiva 2003; see also Einarsdottir 2005). Hence the centrality of funerary rituals among the Papel, conceived as the means to maintain the peaceful coexistence between the living and the dead: "the funeral rites guarantee the correct positioning of the deceased in the world beyond, and without their realization serious dangers threaten the survivors, because the dead will not rest in peace and torment the living until they fulfil their obligation and perform the celebrations. The properly cared dead ascend to the category of 'ancestors' and shall ensure the well-being of their kin" (Saraiva 2003:183). Accordingly, funerals play a crucial role in the whole complex of Papel traditional practices, whose chief aim is keeping the relationship between the earthly world and the hereafter as peaceful as possible. As the opposite of the protector ancestor is the vengeful ancestor, funeral rituals which are badly accomplished or not accomplished seriously endanger the whole lineage. While local religion often requires the involvement of the lineage as a whole, Christian conversion is a matter of individual choice. Nonetheless, individual conversions have direct consequences on the whole kin: if one withdraws from ritual obligations, the whole group will suffer the consequences. Hence, believers' *desvio* may be caused less by "persecution" than by social pressure and sense of responsibility towards one's family.

In this sense, the expansion of Christianity may be related to the increase of anxiety associated to death in contemporary Guinea-Bissau. Putting in the words of my Balanta friend, many Guineans "go to the Gospel because they live in fear of the spirits of the dead".

Apparently, the rising of world religions is gradually producing important changes in the local conceptions of death. On the one hand, Christianity (like Islam) denies reincarnation, insisting that each soul has only one life; on the other it fosters the idea of a divine judgement after life, in which the dead would be saved or not as an individual (Peel 1990). Therefore, rather than being a matter of maintaining order in the cycle of reincarnation, the notion of death is increasingly associated with that of salvation, turning it into an individual concern. As a result, from an "animistic" point of view, as the members of the lineage gradually convert, rituals are increasingly forgotten or not properly performed, and the ancestors become more and more vengeful. In a sort of feedback mechanism, protector ancestors seem turn into vengeful ancestors. Hence the necessity of a cleaner cut with ancestral practices, as proclaimed in Evangelical churches.

Unlike the Catholic Church, which has been relatively tolerant in relation to its members who remain involved in traditional practices, in Guinea-Bissau Evangelical churches have insisted on the necessity to "make a break with the past" (Meyer 1998), either with respect to a personal life of sin, or a collective history of paganism. However, this rhetoric of rupture may not be understood as a strict rule of behaviour, but rather as a project or an ideal model. In reality, general church dogma strongly condemns members who are discovered to have actively participated in a traditional ceremony, for example by performing a sacrifice. In addition, eating the meat of sacrificed animals is considered as highly contaminating by Evangelical believers. In the case of a man who died while I was in Bissau after having attended a funeral, his death was associated by his Evangelical neighbours with ingestion of meat during the ceremony. Nonetheless, sometimes even Evangelical believers may be involved in traditional rituals which are of major importance for their lineage. In that case, rather than incurring disciplinary sanctions or social stigmatization, they may prefer to leave the church. If later they wish to reintegrate into the congregation, they must make a public apology.

Therefore, both within Catholic and Evangelical churches, Guinean Christianity seem to engage in a dialectic with local religions, resulting in a coexistence of belief systems and moralities. The Catholic strategy tends to result in syncretism and religious dualism, reflected in the widespread recourse of Guinean Catholics, in topic moments of their lives, to local religious practices such as *torna-boka*, divination and traditional therapies. By contrast, the

Evangelical approach takes the form of a continuous transition “in and out” the community of believers. In this sense, Evangelical religious experience could be described as an effort to mark and maintain the difference between two distinct logics, an effort which is, however, always unstable and incomplete.

In this chapter I have analysed the stories of conversion of my interlocutors, bringing to light some key elements that may help the reader to understand the motivations which led many believers to undertake the path of Christ, ideally abandoning their previous worldviews, moral systems and religious practices. Among these motivations, a crucial one seems to be the fear of mystical attacks. This perturbing feeling was the outcome of unfortunate circumstances, such as infertility or incurable diseases, which within local aetiology are generally associated with sorcery or spiritual punishment, exerted either by envious human enemies or by supernatural beings, in retaliation for failure to perform a ceremony. Hence, many believers would have converted in order to get free from occult bonding, and to be able of living without fear. Then, by attending church regularly they underwent a radical transformation, which led them to reinterpret their accidents under a new worldview.

When they assert that after their conversion they felt free from the fear of occult powers, believers express their relief for being released from harassing bonds with human enemies – who, according to local ideas about sorcery, mainly belong to the same kin of the victim – as weel as malevolent ancestors and spirits of the land. This “desire to be free” does not necessary result in specific ritual actions, as in the case of the “deliverance” practices performed by Ghanaian Pentecostals and described by Birgit Meyer. Nonetheless, these narratives seem to arouse from the same propensity to regard as potentially threatening the symbolic ties with one’own kin, ancestors and land. Birgit Meyer has been pioneer in connecting deliverance practices and discourses with a temporality peculiar to African Pentecostalism, and focused on the rupture with the past. Within this Pentecostal view of time the past would be seenas a curse, wile personal and collective progress would be held as only achievable by “making a complete break with the past” (Meyer 1998). In my dissertation, I would like to highlight another aspect of Evangelical conversion, whereby transition to a world religion is associated with physical mobility. Like the Ghanaian Pentecostal portrayed by Meyer, my interlocutors represent conversion as a rupture with a personal past of sin, according to a rhetoric which is fairly widespread in the Evangelical world, and which goes

back to the Pauline model. However, in the case of Evangelical Guinean migrants, the notion of rupture seems to acquire a further dimension. To the extent that the symbolic break with the past turns into a geographical break with the country of origin, the experience of a spatial detachment is superimposed on the image of a temporal distance. Indeed, for many of my interlocutors, the decision to migrate appears as connected with the will to escape from the occult threats coming from the land, its inhabitants and its spiritual owners[23]. By contrast, the Holy Spirit is described as a superior entity able to protect the believer in every place and to accompany the migrant in his/her travels. In this case, so, the dialectic between continuity and rupture is intertwined with the issue of migration.

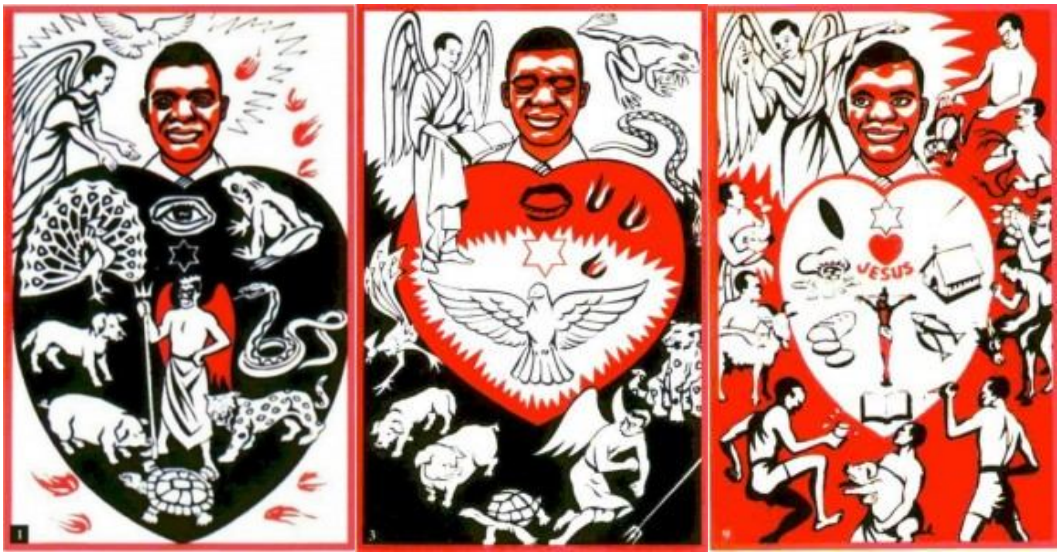
Hence, by turning progressively "disembedded" (Cole 2010:184) from symbolic and social ties that are experienced as threatening, Evangelical believers become amenable to new kinds of commitments. In fact, by joining an Evangelical church, believers express their will to connect to a religious transnational network. By disconnecting from localized worlds, they make themselves available to global connections. However, this cut is not free of incompleteness, contradictions and sufferings, as I will show in the next chapters.

[23] This aspect is especially evident in Agostinho's history, which will be reported in chapter 5.

Chapter 3

Modernity, or the art of making connections

Drawing on the conversion narratives of my interlocutors, in the previous chapter I examined some features of the Bissau-Guinean religious landscape as a "push factor" (Robbins 2004:33) in the adoption of Evangelical Christianity. In particular, the fear of mystical attacks appeared as a recurrent motive for conversion, generally arising in association with unfortunate events that are ascribed within local aetiology to sorcery or punishment by spiritual entities. Thus, as they felt threatened by invisible powers, many believers converted in order to free themselves from fear. My aim in the following pages is to connect this "push factor" with the "pull factor" (Robbins 2004:33) constituted by several peculiar aspects of Evangelical Christianity which renders it so attractive to the Guineans who have adopted it. I will focus in particular on the association between Evangelical narratives and local discourses about modernity. The fear of being victimized by occult powers was not the only motivation that prompted my interlocutors and their forebears to "accept Jesus Christ". In these conversion narratives, another series of motives appears as well, associated with encounters between foreign Protestant missionaries, often of British or American origin



2. The Hert of Man: charts

The Heart of Man

Felix is a Balanta. He lives in Bissau and is currently the minister of a Pentecostal church called MAFI (Ministério de Amor pela Fé Internacional, see chapter 1). During my stay, he hosted me in his house, allowing me the opportunity to speak with him frequently (I will return to the subject of his experiences in the following chapters). He was born in Bissau, in 1970. His parents moved there from the Balanta regions of Bula and Bissorã. His father was a high-ranking police officer, who graduated in law in Russia immediately following independence. When Felix was born, his parents were not Evangelicals. Felix and his older sister Antónia were the first to "accept Jesus", but later on Antónia returned to Catholicism.

> My father was an animist. He said he was a Catholic, there in Bula he had contact with the Catholic Church in his youth, but then I've never seen my father go to church. I saw the Catholic Bible on the bookcase, but he never went to church [...]. Antónia and I, we were the first to go to church, I was seven years old. It was when I started going to school. [...]
>
> I was living near the church. That kind of stuff… There was a Sunday school, and I saw the missionary Hans, everyone went there to see the white man, you know? I went to see the white man who played guitar, he was doing beautiful things, singing, teaching, and I went to attend this holy day Sunday school event. There was a poster that talked about the "heart of man" [in Portuguese: *coração do homem*]. There, they initially showed a man with a hard, serious face. They showed things, animals representing sinful attitudes of man, like the snake, which is bad, like the peacock, representing pride, the tiger, showing destruction, they showed and taught us through this figure, which is called "the heart of man". This man had a head, neck and heart; he had a heart full of all those things. And it was taught: the man who does not know God, he has a certain attitude; and in the middle of the heart there was a devil, a drawing of the devil with horns, red eyes and [...] a large fork, for stabbing the person and throwing her into fire! The demon in the middle is a symbol of what? Of being at the centre of man: he dominated, condemned the action of man. This was taught there, I was there and it was very interesting for me. Because I identified myself, it showed the cat, symbol of robbery, theft, I saw that and found the message very interesting,

> and I decided: "Hey, I'll accept Jesus!" I decided to do this because later other figures were shown of the same man, who had already accepted Jesus. They showed that the man's face had started to look pretty, had become less serious, it was a smiley face; the man's heart was beginning to be purified. Then it showed how when the man accepts Jesus, an angel of God came with a sword, and those animals that had their face turned to Satan who was at the centre, they began to flee. [...] There, they show that the heart starts to becom pure, it starts to turn white, and consequently the face becomes more smiley... a face saying: "I am now a good man". You realize that the hardened man is becoming a good man. Then, in the third figure, it shows the clean man, with an angel of God and Jesus in the centre of the the human heart. By then the man already has a completely white heart, which is a symbol of purity; he has a totally good face and everything else [...].
>
> In my time, when I was a child, they used these drawings, the churches used them as an instrument of evangelization, for both children and adults, and they used the same figure. And at that time I started going to church. I grew up in church; I spent my adolescence and youth in church.

Felix's story brings to light two crucial aspects: the fascination that a white, foreign missionary had on an African child; and missionary activity promoting a model of Christian personhood, as well as a schema of self-transformation[1]. Regarding the first point, it is worth noting that most early Protestant missionaries were natives of Northern Europe and USA; few were Portuguese. When I was in Bissau, I personally met the missionary mentioned by Felix. He is called Hans Friensel, a tall Dutch man with blue eyes and blond hair. After I heard Felix's conversion story, while thinking of the missionary Hans and the instinctive hostility of many Guineans against their former colonizers, a hypothesis came to my mind. Perhaps as happens today with Brazilian missionaries, Northern European evangelists were perceived by new converts as heralds of a form of Christianity considered charming since it was "modern", but free from colonial connotations.

[1]"The Heart of Man" is an anonymous pamphlet dating back to the Nineteenth century. It was largely used as an instrument of evangelization by generations of Protestant missionaries, and continues to be employed in Evangelical circles. In the 1960s, José Júlio Gonçalves underlined the central role of printed material (including books, pamphlets, reviews, journals, mimeographed sheets, etc.) among the methods employed by Protestant missionaries in African Portuguese provinces (Gonçalves 1960).

In Felix's story, the second element of interest was the model of personhood proposed through the attractive images in the Protestant pamphlet. Within many Guinean indigenous cosmologies, thoughts and emotions are thought to be gradually acquired by a person from the surrounding environment. As elsewhere in Africa, newborns are often thought to occupy a less-than-human position, while the status of a socially recognized person can be progressively attained through experience, growth and education. For instance, among the Bijagós, as observed by Chiara Pussetti (2005) the *n'atribá* (a set of psychological processes including thoughts, emotions, dreams, and memories, and translated by the author with the expression "thoughts-feelings") are not considered to be innate, but rather gradually acquired by children over the course of their relationship with the adults around them, and through the medium of their *kugbí*, (body), conceived as a "sensory gateway to the world" (Pussetti 2005:63). Therefore, the human body is not conceived as an impenetrable barrier, but instead as a porous border through which other peoples' thoughts and emotions, as well as spirits and supernatural beings, can enter and influence the actions of a person. According to this concept, behaviour which is considered morally reprehensible is often ascribed to external influences, such as witchcraft or possession by supernatural beings. Besides *kugbí*, (body) and *n'atribá* (thoughts-feelings), the third basic element of Bijagó personhood is the *orebok*, a term that is translated into Kriol using different terms, including *alma* or *spiritu* (soul, spirit), *defuntu* (dead, deceased), *iran* (spiritual entity) and *vida* (life). The author associated the term with the notions of "energy" or "life force" as being less an immaterial principle, comparable to individual conscience, than an impersonal energy, represented as a white shadow clinging to the back of the *kugbí. Orebok*, *n'atribá* and *kugbí* are conceived as strictly interdependent: if the *orebok* provides the *kugbí* with the energy that enables it to perform its tasks, at the same time it is thanks to this union with the *kugbí*, conceived as a gateway to the world, that the *orebok* can gradually acquire the *n'atribá* – that is, those individual characters that will lead it to completeness (Pussetti 2005:61). However, to a certain extent the *orebok* may lead some activities independently from the body, and can be lost, attacked, caught, killed and eaten by a sorcerer. In all these cases, according to Bijagó aetiology, the *kugbí* gets sick in a short time until it dies.

If local concepts of what constitutes a person are similar to those described by Pussetti, what about Christian personhood? Generally speaking, in Christian cosmology

anthropology, negative emotions, thoughts, and actions are clustered into the category of sin, and are conceived as coming from within a person. Nevertheless, the human soul is also the main site of a meeting e with God, on which the chance to break free from sin depends. In principle, if each person is thought to be contaminated by original sin since birth, due to Christ's sacrifice, they have the possibility of being redeemed. However, the extent to which a believer may be regarded as free from sin varies according to different Christian traditions, and this has been the subject of various controversies over the course of Christian history. In Catholicism, redemption is considered to be the combined effect of three sacraments: baptism, confirmation, and penance. With infant baptism and subsequent confirmation, the believer receives remission from original sin, while with penance s/he one must confess the sins committed since baptism and is en absolved by an ordained minister, and then does penance. In general, Reformed Protestantism continues to believe that baptism has the power to erase all traces of original sin. However, to accept Jesus as saviour and to repent of all one's sins is not a guarantee of salvation; on the contrary, personal sins subsequent to conversion and unbelief lead to eternal damnation. Some branches of Protestantism, including Calvinism, maintain the doctrine of predestination, according to which only a restricted number of people chosen by God are guaranteed salvation, without their actions or deeds being taken into consideration. Methodism preaches the doctrine of sanctification, in which, following conversion, the power of God's grace is believed to cleanse a Christian of the corrupting influence of original sin in this life. Finally, within Pentecostalism, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is held as a further sign of Christian perfection, usually evidenced by speaking in tongues. However, even a "born-again" believer cannot be certain of being permanently delivered from sin. Hence the importance of the spiritual war against Satan, a war which is mostly led through practices of deliverance from Satanic influences (Meyer 1998; Corten and Marshall-Fratani 2001; Marshall 2009). In this regard, even if believers cannot be fully possessed by demons, certain areas of their lives may still be controlled by such forces, which in African Pentecostalism are crucially associated with the spiritual entities of local religions.

What emerges from this brief summary is the extreme variability of Christian ideas about the nature of the individual. However, Christian personhood is commonly conceived as focused on inwardness, individual moral responsibility, and individual agency. One of the most eminent promoters of this perspective is Louis Dumont (1980; 1992), who theorized the

inherent individualism of Christianity. According to Dumont, Christian individualism is grounded on its insistence on the individual as the sole defining factor of divine judgment, in relation to the concept of individual responsibility. Moreover, Dumont posited a close relationship between Christianity, individualism, and modernity. Defining modern ideology as "the system of ideas and values which are distinctive of modern societies" (Dumont 1992:19), he traced back its origins to the first centuries of the Christian era, when the Christian individual, formerly a stranger to the world, has been gradually implicated within worldly relations. Dumont's argument is based on the assumption that different types of societies are associated with specific systems of values and ideas, which are composed of basic elements ("value-ideas") organized in relation to one another by a "paramount value" (Dumont 1980; Dumont 1992). According to him, the two main paramount values governing human societies are individualism and holism. Holistic societies are those in which paramount value is placed on the good of society as a whole, and the actions of each person are valued in relation to their contribution to the greater good of the whole. In contrast, individualist societies are those in which people and their actions are evaluated on the basis of their personal projects and goals. Therefore, Dumont associated Christianity, individualism and modernity, and distinguished Western societies from the rest of the world, which is described as "traditional" and "holistic".In light of this distinction, the author proposed dividing all human societies according to the binary opposition of modern/non-modern. However, he also admitted the abstract nature of this dichotomy, recognizing that the contemporary world would be better referred to as "hybrid" and "post-modern", being the result of a close combination between individualistic and holistic value-ideas.

Dumont's reflections on Christian individualism have been largely employed in the anthropology of Christianity. In particular, they have been used to support theories on cultural rupture in Christian conversion studies, as in the case of Joel Robbins's work on the adoption of Christianity among the Urapmin (Robbins 2004). Robbins tied Dumont's argument to Marilyn Strathern's idea of a contrast between the Melanesian "partible" or "dividual" person and the Western bounded "in-dividual". Revisiting the Maussian model of gift-exchange (Mauss 1967), Strathern illustrated how in Melanesia the person is commonly considered a dividual being, resulting from the constant incorporation of gifts, contributions, bodily substances and emotions of others. Thus, the Melanesian person is essentially relational,

produced by the relations established over time with a plurality of other persons (Strathern 1988). Coontrastingly, the modern Western individual is marked by the internal unity and non-divisibility of the subject, as distinct from the things that they own and about which they conduct transaction. As mentioned in chapter 2, Robbins drew on these theories to argue that among contemporary Urapmin, a "relationalist" morality (having its origins in pre-Christian culture), and an "individualist" morality (associated with Pentecostal Christianity), co-exist in a hybrid situation, as two contrasting principles in everyday life.

And yet, Dumont's postulation raises some critical points. First, the presumed correlation between modernity and individualism is far from evident. Retracing the developments of the anthropology of kinship, Enric Porqueres I Gené (2009b) called into question the idea of a fundamental dichotomy between "the West and the rest" in relation to personhood and kinship. The author warned against the assumption according to which Western modernity is marked by a radical centrality of the individual, detached from the ties of kinship, in contrast with non-Western contexts, where the person is conceived as inherently relational. Recent developments in the discipline, focused on new reproduction technologies and emerging forms of kinship in Europe and the USA, show the opposite. Phenomena such as the investigation of the genealogies of the sick in the field of "family medicine", strategies to avoid the incest as applied in medical protocols related to the donation of gametes, as well as protocols on international adoptions, all prove the enduring importance of kinship relations in contemporary societies. According to the author, these studies question the idea of a radical distinction between modern and non-modern patterns of personhood, it being understood that the notions of person are culturally constructed: "people are made through their relationships: this can probably be said both of the Melanesian context and of Western conceptions" (Porqueres i Gené 2009a:241).

Secondly, the assumption of Christian individualism can also be criticized. As pointed out by Mark Mosko in his article *Partible penitents* (2010), the Christian notion of the person is not limited to the inner, indestructible and indivisible soul of the penitent, as Dumont and other authors have seemed to suppose. On the contrary, the Christian person itself is conceived in terms of "dividuality", or, in other words, as a combination of the individual soul and other parts, such as will, faith and mortal body. Although the first element is considered hierarchically superior to the others, it remains a part of the plurality that forms the Christian

being. In the encounter between Christianity and Melanesian indigenous cultures, therefore, Mosko, unlike Robbins, emphasized continuity rather than rupture. According to Mosko, the adoption of Christianity in Melanesia consists in the "conversion of one dividualist form of personhood, agency and sociality into another" (Mosko 2010:232).

Furthermore, as observed by Ramon Sarró (Sarró 2012), the tendency to understand the Christian self as "a Leibnitzian monad" bounded in his or her inner world fails to recognise the centrality of relations in Christian personhood. Hence the importance of empathy, charity and love in Christian doctrine and practice are not emphasised, although it is worth noting that in Christian theology, charity is acknowledged as a fundamental virtue, alongside faith and hope. In addition, in the New Testament, Jesus placed love as the foundation of the new commandment, stating that we should love God above all things and our neighbour as ourselves. Therefore, even in Pentecostal Africa, conversion does not imply a clear cut fomr previous relationships and a hyper-autonomization of the subject, as Pentecostal rhetoric and some scholars seem to maintain. In fact, "the break with the past and the engagement with Christian notions of personhood found in Charismatic[2] conversion do not mean a rupture with relations and the emergence of a neatly bounded unrelated self" (Sarró 2012:457). Therefore, far from endorsing a rupture between the believers and their non-believing kin, the adoption of new notions of self and family takes place "with a myriad of microlocal negotiations", as evident in the stories of conversion reported in chapter 2.

On the basis of these reflections, I can return to Felix and his "Hearth of Man". Far from displaying the image of an indivisible and impenetrable self, the Christian penitent depicted in the Hearth of Man appeared as the emblem of the unbounded person, with a circulation of non-human entities, such as demons, angels, and all sorts of animals representing human sins, circulating in and out of his soul and influencing his nature. Painted in this way, the human heart seems less a bounded monad than a central square at rush hour! Either way, this picture must have seemed to Felix not so different from more familiar ideas

[2] The term "Charismatic" has a shifting meaning. On the one hand, it identifies those groups that appeared in the 1970s within the main historical denominations in the Protestant, Catholic and Ortodox streams, combining their traditional doctrines with a Pentecostallly inspired spirituality. On the other hand, it designates the churches that, while accepting the experience of speaking in tongues, most insist on the importance of the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of individuals through His gifts (charisms), including miracles, prophecies and healing. The terms "Neo-Pentecostal" and "Neo-Carismatic" generally refer to the rich diversity of Christian movements that emerged since the last 1970s in Latin America, Africa and Asia, who share a spirituality of Pentecostal inspiration without belonging to the historical denominations.

about the person. Perhaps it was just this image of human relatedness, resounding with local personhood, but different in many ways, deployed by a European Protestant missionary, which aroused the interest of this Balanta child, as well as that of his peers, in a newly independent Bissau.

Modernity and its critics

In this chapter, I will argue that the main "pull factor" that lured many Guineans towards Evangelical Christianity pertain to local ideas about modernity. Before proceeding, I will endeavour to briefly outline the literature on modernity. This is not an easy task, as legions of scholars have focused on one or another of its many facets, resulting in its contours becoming vaguer and more blurred. Firstly, there is an historical approach which can be traced back to the origins of modernity in the early XVI century. In this period, a new, modern way of life arose in Europe in three particular contexts: cultural Renaissance, Protestant Reformation, and the discovery of the New World. One of the starting points of this perspective on modernity was Weber's classical thesis about the role of Protestantism in the rise of modern capitalism. In the course of its history, modernity was marked by other critical turning points, such as the Enlightenment, the American Revolution, and the French Revolution. Hence, this genealogical perspective sees modernity as a historical process, with a definite beginning and a perceptible development over the course of time. Moreover, by emphasizing the break between the Modern and Middle Ages, it engenders a diachronic dichotomy between modernity and (European) tradition.

The second approach to the analysis of modernity is the philosophical discourse, mostly founded on Hegel's thoughts and ideas. As pointed out by Olúfémi Táíwò (2010), the three key concepts of this discourse are subjectivity, reason, and progress. At the core of Hegel's "principle of subjectivity", there is individual consciousness and the right of the subject to autonomy and freedom. On these grounds, individualism becomes the principle of the modern social order, based on the distinction between state and civil society. Moreover, the historical changes that occurred in Europe throughout the XVI century led to a foundational shift in temporal consciousness: a new sense of the present, founded on an opposition to the past. According to this new vision of time, expressed in the notion of progress, the present is perceived as a moment of becoming, advancement, acceleration, and

continuous renewal. This transformation had profound intellectual and moral consequences: knowledge was no longer founded on revelation, tradition, or authority, but on conformity with reason; and to the extent to which that the past was no longer a source of legitimacy , modernity would have "to create its normativity out of itself" (Habermas 1987:7)[3].

And finally there are those theories which view modernity as a contemporary condition, comprised of a set of specific traits. These features are viewed as the outcome of radical changes that have affected the world over the last two centuries, including the industrial, scientific, and communication revolutions. This understanding, which includes most classical theories of modernity, emerged in the first half of the nineteenth century and both simultaneously described and criticized the modern way of life. In this group Weber reappeared, insofar as he placed a close connection between capitalism and modernity. In his view, if the combination of Puritanism and an accumulation of wealth were the origins of capitalism, its historical developments led it away from concerns with personal salvation and ascetic discipline, towards a focus on rational profit making. For Weber, the hallmarks of modernity were rational calculation, bureaucracy, abstraction, and secularism, a series of elements that he summarized in the expression "disenchantment of the world". Like Weber, Marx associated modernity with the rise of capitalism, describing it as a destructive force that replaced traditional social contexts and relationships. Under capitalism, modern subjects became mere workers and consumers, living in an individualised, amoral and unstable environment. According to Durkheim, modernity is associated with the end of custom, the discovery of the artificiality of morality, and the resulting anomie. More recent literature has continued to lengthen the list of modernity's traits, including the growth of instability, fragmentation and diversity, and difficulties in constructing a stable sense of identity (Appadurai 1996); the compression of time and space (Giddens 1991; Harvey 1990); the emergence of new forms of subjectivity, including individualism, personal self-cultivation, and a novel sense of the private (Giddens 1991). According to Miller, this set of contradictory attributes may be understood as a consequence of the intellectual revolution firstly described by Hegel: as a new temporal sense has undermined the conventional grounds for moral life, the current marks of modernity canbe viewed as an attempt to replace lost certainties with new goals and beliefs (Miller 1994).

[3] For a synthesis of the philosophical discourse on modernity, see Miller 1994 and Táíwò 2010.

Among this wide-ranging literature, the argument which has had more impact on the spheres of politics, economy, and popular representations all over the world is probably modernization theory, which became the main framework of American sociology in the aftermath of World War II. Combining Max Weber's ideas and nineteenth-century evolutionism, Talcott Parsons, Edward Shils, and others produced a scientific framework which aimed to be descriptive and analytical, predictive and prescriptive at the same time (Appadurai 2013). As observed by James Ferguson, within modernization theory, different elements of the "modern society" formed a "necessary package": "things like industrial economy and modern transportation and communications necessarily brought with them political democracy; a transition from extended to nuclear families and from communal to individual identities; the rise of bounded, monadic individuals; the secularization of world view; the rise of scientific rationalism and critical reflexivity, etc." (Ferguson 200 6:183). According to Ferguson, the success of this approach was due to its insertion into a specific historical moment; in the context of decolonization (in Africa and elsewhere), the modernization discourse was not only a scientific theory but also a widespread narrative "for the 'nation-building' and 'economic-development' programs of the new, post-independence elites" (ibid: 182). As such, it provided an ideology for the political agendas of post-colonial nation states and, later, international institutions. However, as was commonly recognized, the failure of this discourse is patent today, both in academic theory and practical economical terms. If modernization theory affirmed that the dissemination of specific tools of technology, productivity, entrepreneurship, and education would produce progress in the spheres of freedom, equality, productivity, secularization, and prosperity on a worldwide scale, a series of facts contradicted its predictions. In fact, in many places around the world, democratic elections did not lead to the human rights or increased political participation; nor did economic liberalization lead to a general increase in wealth; while, over the same period, religion has been experiencing considerable resurgence and expansion.

If diachronic approaches to the notion of modernity maintain that there was an unprecedented rupture in the history of Europe, resulting in a binary opposition between modernity and tradition, synchronic perspectives often hold modernity as a synonym for "Western civilization", giving way to spatial dichotomies such as modern/non-modern or Western/non-Western. These dualisms have been criticized by historians and anthropologists.

For instance, some studies revealed the recent and invented nature of many presumed "traditions" (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1992). Ruth Marshall wondered if it is even possible to make a distinction between tradition and modernity in contemporary Africa. Witchcraft and Christianity, for example, are produced through the same historical experience – that is to say, the moment of rupture inaugurated by colonialism and the arrival of the missions (Marshall 2009). Arjun Appadurai underlined the difficulties in understanding the multiplicity of the present in terms of modernity (Appadurai 1996:2). Hence, due to its ideological biases and inner contradictions, the suitability of modernity as an analytical tool for understanding contemporary global change has been called into question in many respects. In particular, the contribution of anthropology to the debate on modernity has involved criticizing oversimplifications and questioning the homogenizing, Eurocentric, and evolutionary aspects of the notion. To overcome such biases, several authors recently suggested that modernity should be conceived in the plural, and that we should speak of "alternative modernities". Rather than viewing modernity as a sequence of stages or a homogenizing process, these ethnographically grounded analyses generally emphasize its elements of contingency and variability. While acknowledging the global diffusion of certain ideas, institutions, and social forms, the idea of multiple modernities tries to "unpack" the notion of modernity, "to sever its automatic connection with the West", to question the idea of the arrow of time implicit in modernization theory and to stress the idea of "coeval cultural difference" in the contemporary world (Ferguson 200 6). Rather than a package of correlated traits, modernity in the plural is seen as a process of *bricolage* and creative invention, combining elements of "Western modernity" with local components (see (Comaroff and Comaroff 1993; Piot 1999; Eisenstadt 2000). Moreover, the concept of "alternative modernities" is often associated with the "domestication of modernity" paradigm, which maintains that cultural difference implies resistance to colonial and neo-liberal power. From this perspective, specific religious forms can be considered an attempt to master the effects of globalization upon local societies (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991; 1993)[4].

With regard to the study of cultural change in Africa, despite the merits of its critical analysis, the "multiple modernities" paradigm encounters crucial problems (Bordonaro and Carvalho 2010, see also Thomassen 2012). Firstly, if it cannot be isolated from particular

[4]For an analysis of the "domestication of modernity" paradigm, see Marshall 2009.

contexts, the very concept of modernity seems to lose its analytical value. Secondly, the analysis of modernity in exclusively cultural terms, while stressing equality among cultures, overlooks the "all too real" differences in power and wealth, especially in Africa in comparison to the rest of the world (Ferguson 200 6). Finally, it overshadows the role that the idea of modernity plays in many popular fields of discourse as a "social status implying certain institutional and economic conditions of life" (Ferguson 200 6:168). Displacing modernity "from theory to practice" (Bordonaro and Carvalho 2010), James Ferguson suggested treating modernity not as an analytical term, but rather as "as a local tongue" (Ferguson 1999), which emerged in the context of the current relationship between Africa and the West, in a world which is more and more interconnected, but in a selective and discontinuous way. Ferguson pointed out the paradoxical participation of Africa in the global space. The continent is increasingly connected to global networks through new transnational economic channels and new forms of government, such as NGO and international institutions. However, it continues to be subjected to extensive forms of disconnection, exclusion, and marginalization. Accordingly, popular discourses about modernity in Africa reflect widespread claims of membership in a wider society, in a context of extreme marginalization in a global economy: "Modernity in this historically specific conjuncture appears […] as a global status and a political-economic condition: the condition of being 'first class'" (Ferguson 200 6:187). In the author's view, the shift of the concept of modernity from *telos* to status, from the narrative of progress and development to the language of connections and aspirations, is also the outcome of an historical change: "the re-emergent question of supranational membership – of Africans as, in some yet to be defined sense, 'citizens of the world' – puts the question of the unequal relation between Africa and the West back on the table in a radical way, after decolonization and national independence had channelled it, for a time, into the question of national development" (Ferguson 200 6:23).

Christianity, colonialism, and modernity in Africa

The relationship between modernity and Christianization has been a recurrent issue in African anthropology. Many scholars have objected to the idea of a close connection between modernity and secularization, in light of the rising religious effervescence and the recent projection of Christian churches in the public sphere. Other authors, following an historical

approach, have pointed out the central role of Christian missionaries in introducing certain aspects of modernity in Africa. The latter point is particularly relevant in trying to understand the effects of the missionary encounter in Guinea-Bissau. According to Jean and John Comaroff (Comaroff and Comaroff 1986; Comaroff and Comaroff 1991), Protestant evangelists were intimately involved in the colonial process in South Africa. In analysing the historical role of Methodist missionaries in the nineteenth-century political life of the Tswana in Southern Africa, they focused on two interrelated dimensions: political involvement, in the sphere of institutionalized power relations, and the exertion of power at the level of meaning and everyday habits. While the manifest political action of the missionaries was marked by ambiguity and had limited effects, their key historical role lay in their "imposition of a new mode of being" (Comaroff and Comaroff 1986)(). In this domain, their impact appear much more trenchant, instilling among the Tswana "the signs and practices of a powerful new order. In this respect, they played a vital part in the more general process of colonization; for while the incorporation of a subject people always involved some degree of material coercion, it was the subtle inculcation of European values that was especially crucial" (Comaroff and Comaroff 1986:15). By introducing a series of values and socio-cultural forms, such as farming technologies, the idea of the nuclear family, private property, new styles of dressing, literacy, and a new conception of time, they succeeded in producing a "colonization of consciousness" (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991). Nonetheless, although the Methodist mission proclaimed the right of self-determination for all, they could not give to the Tswana the liberal democracy promised by their ideology and implied by their practices. In this respect, "they succeeded only in exposing native communities to more coercive forces" (Comaroff and Comaroff 1986:16), laying the ground for their "integration in to the capitalist world" (Comaroff and Comaroff 1986:2). It was the first generation of Tswana Christian leaders who brought to light this contradiction, expressing the first open resistance to the colonial order by pointing to its inconsistency with the Gospel. Many of the South African Native National Congress's leaders studied in mission schools and were active members of Protestant congregations. However, "the language of protest remained within terms that had been introduced by the evangelists, […] [and] the struggle was framed in the rhetoric of liberal democracy, individual equality, and the separation of church and state" (Comaroff and Comaroff 1986:16). Yet, besides this movement, there was another front of resistance to the

hegemony of the "new order": it was the independent Black Christian movement, including Zionist Christianity, expressing the voice of the illiterate peasant-proletarian underclass. These churches expressed an implicit yet more radical rejection of the colonial and (later) post-colonial order, wherein "the definition of personhood, community, work, space, and time – as well as the ostensible division of 'religion' and 'politics' inherent in mission culture – are vigorously contested" (Comaroff and Comaroff 1986:17). According to the authors, this latter reversal of the language and ideology of mission discourse constituted a transition "from revelation to revolution" (Comaroff and Comaroff 1986; Comaroff and Comaroff 1991).

Olúfémi Táíwò (Táíwò 2010), focusing on the Nigerian case, also analysed the role of Protestant missionaries in introducing modernity to Africa, but starting from different assumptions and resulting in opposite conclusions. First and most importantly, Táíwò's view of modernity was antithetic to that of the Comaroffs, who attached to the term an essentially negative meaning. For them, modernity dealt with the transformations imposed on local communities with the advent of the colonial and, later, neo-liberal global order, which engendered multiple forms of acceptance, domestication and resistance. By contrast Táíwò, starting from a philosophical perspective and adopting an Enlightenment position, maintained that "the modern way of life represents a leap forward in human history" (Táíwò 2010:5), and that "we must overcome this prima facie hostility to things modern, especially the philosophical discourse of modernity" (Táíwò 2010:16). Furthermore, he argued that the relationship between colonialism and modernity in Africa should be rethought, by disentangling the two concepts. Although colonialist ideology claimed that colonial rule was aimed at implanting modern ways of life in African societies, this statement was never translated into action. On the contrary, colonialism pre-empted the introduction of modernity in the continent, with the result that modern institutions, ideas, and practices, would have basically unravelled in post-colonial Africa. Therefore, according to the author, the genealogy of modernity in Africa should be reconceptualised. In the case of Nigeria, the credit for introducing Africans to modernity should be given to Protestant missionaries, many of whom were themselves Africans, who settled on the Nigerian coast in the nineteenth century before the establishment of formal colonial rule. On the one hand, by creating self-governing national churches, foreign missionaries were driven by the modern principle of subjectivity, which prompted them to bet on African agency. On the other hand, they encouraged the first

generation of African converts to remake their societies after the image of modernity. Their project included the introduction of new ways of life, including forms of production, family patterns, modes of governance, forms of spatial organization, ethical values, conceptions of time, and intellectual skills, one of the most incisive innovations being the promotion of literacy. However, "Africa's march toward modernity" was disrupted by the advent of colonial administrators in West Africa from the third quarter of the nineteenth century onwards. By introducing indirect rule, the British colonizers replaced the missionaries' "autonomy model" with an "aid model" of governance inspired by the principle of "sociocryonics": "enthusiasm about novelty, especially concerning social forms, was replaced by the ignoble science of sociocryonics, the frozen preservation of outmoded and moribund social forms" (Táíwò 2010:80). Therefore, despite their claim to bring "civilization", the main preoccupation of colonial regimes was not to carry out social reform, but to control and maintain order so as to facilitate economic exploitation. And what is worse, stated Táíwòs, is that this trend would have continued within post-colonial regimes. As a consequence,

> Africans […] have borne the worst burdens of modernity without ever having enjoyed any of the benefits, especially those concerning the rule of law, productive economies, liberal democracy, and some degree of individualism as a principle of social ordering […]. In the name of protecting the natives from the ravages of modernity, colonialists carefully but effectively shut Africans out of the march of science and technology, new ways of organizing life and thought, and new possibilities of remaking their own communities using whatever new models they might care to appropriate from whatever part of the world they might care to look at (Táíwò 2010:61).

Táíwò's theory therefore calls into question the straight identification between Christianity and colonialism, and suggests that missionary action should be scrutinised against the background of historical contingencies. Far from being an "agent of political empire" (Mudimbe 1988:47), the generation of missionaries who settled on Nigerian shores in the nineteen century did not depend on a mother-country in the colonial sense of the term. By contrast, driven by a universalist stance, they wished to lead Africans to Christianity and modernity and worked assiduously to realize that objective.

What is interesting in Táíwò's argument is that it is explicitly inspired by Amílcar Cabral's reflections about Portuguese colonial rule in Africa. According to Cabral, the historical mission of imperialism is "the speeding up of the process of development of the

productive forces and transformation in the direction of increasing complexity of the characteristics of the mode of production; sharpening class differentiation with the development of the bourgeoisie and intensification of class struggle; and appreciably raising average standard levels in the economic, social and cultural life of the population." (Cabral, quoted in (Táíwò 2010:85). By contrast, the Portuguese administration failed its historical role to effect revolutionary transformations in the areas under its control. Indeed, Táíwò's analysis is particularly suited to the case of the former Portuguese colonies in Africa, where the contradiction between the purported civilizational role and the real actions of the colonial government was especially evident. Indeed, Elísio Macamo's assessment of the historical role of Protestant missionaries in colonial Mozambique is quite close to Táíwò's argument (Macamo 2005). According to Macamo, there is something ambivalent about the experience of modernity in Africa, and especially in Mozambique. This ambiguity marks both colonial administration and missionary activities, but in different ways. According to the author, the regulation of native labour by Portuguese colonial authorities in Mozambique was a way of denying modernity to Africans. While introducing wage labour in order to exploit the African labour force, the colonial state abstained from intervention in other social fields. In fact, the distinctive mark of Portuguese colonization was the politics of tutelage, a combination of French assimilationism and British indirect rule, which assumed that Africans could gradually move from their native status to one of being "assimilated" through a civilizing process. Accordingly, the *Estatuto do Indigenato*[5] (1954) established a distinct citizenship, with different legal norms for natives on the one side, and Europeans and the "assimilated" on the other. However, due to its strict requirements (such as speaking, reading and writing Portuguese, being Christian, havig a wage labour, etc.), few Africans managed to achieve this status. Hence, the promise of modernization contrasted with the assumption that the majority of the African population required distinct forms of social organization: "the policy of separated development extricated the state from its responsibilities […] by denying Africans the possibility of social change consistent with the extent of transformation wrought by the introduction of wage labour […]. It was a denial of their modernity" (Macamo 2005:93).

Ambivalence lay also at the core of Christian missionary action. On the one hand, Christianity was an essential element of the Portuguese colonial project, to the extent that the

[5] Statute of the Indigenous peoples (see chapter 1).

Catholic faith was held as a standard of European "civilization". In this sense, by converting, Africans denied themselves and their culture. On the other hand, Protestant Christianity was for most Mozambicans the beginning of their emancipation from the colonial project, allowing them to recover a sense of self and community. For example, as Teresa Cruz e Silva revealed, specific elements of the Protestant Swiss Mission - such as the construction of hospitals and schools which trained converts in professions such as nursing, agricultural work and education - empowered African converts and allowed them to restructure their social life. Furthermore, the skills acquired in mission schools enabled some of these converts, who later became nationalist leaders, to articulate their grievances against the Portuguese colonial state (Cruz e Silva 2001; 2004). Hence, the Swiss mission was considered a local resource by Mozambican converts: it provided them with a community adapted to new circumstances; it constituted a normative framework within which individuals could work on their personal projects; it enabled individuals to escape the most blatant abuses inflicted by the colonial state, and make the best out of their situation; and it produced alternative knowledge which formed the grounds of national resistance.

After all, these analyses do not stray far from the Comaroffs' account of the Methodist mission among the Tsonga. However, whereas the Comaroffs interpreted the emergence of a Christian nationalist elite in terms of "colonized consciousness", authors like Táíwò, Macamó and Cruz e Silva place emphasis on the empowering and innovative consequences of the mission encounter on African societies, as well as on the crucial historical role of Protestant churches in the emergence of anti-colonial movements.

Modernity as *desenvolvimento*

Despite the wealth of insights they offer, these works on the historical role of Christian missions in colonial and post-colonial Africa tend to employ the notion of modernity as an analytical tool, with all its contradictions and ambiguities. Indeed, their contrasting views arise from their focus on different aspects of a notion which is elusive and and can become blurred. In fact, borrowing a Levi-Straussian concept, modernity may be viewed as a "*signifiant flottant*", a signifier with a vague and highly variable signified, prone to receiving multiple meanings (Lévi-Strauss 1950). In order to overcome the pitfalls of modernity as

theoretical tool, I will try to hone in on modernity as a local discourse, and especially to analyse how modernity is understood by Evangelical Guineans.

As observed by (Karp 2002), modernity and development are key words that are intimately related to one another. Both lack precise definition, and can "take on different meanings depending on the register in which they are used and the circumstances in which they are invoked" (Karp 2002:83). In some cases, as in mainstream theories of development, modernity – understood as a set of forms of organization related to bureaucracy and industrialization - is seen as the motor of development, interpreted in economic and social terms. In other cases, as in popular discourses at the local level, the terms that are translated as "development" may be measured in terms of goods derived from the outside (such as roads, schools, clinics, and consumer goods). For these reasons, according to Karp, development and modernity should be not defined as mutually exclusive concepts, and their specific meaning should be analysed within particular contexts.

As noted by Ivan Karp (2002), development ideology is a constituting feature of a global system which is heir to colonial and imperial rule. Despite being a highly contested notion, subject to multiple interpretations at the local level (and especially in societies which are held as "underdeveloped" within this framework), in its hegemonic version the concept acquired a specific form. It was marked in particular by a set of assumptions about the causal relationship between forms of personhood and economic growth. One of these is that "internal states such as morality qualities are the effective cause of underdevelopment" (Karp 2002:92). This implies a classificatory scheme which posits hierarchical differences among cultures and types of personhood. According to this scheme, the "underdeveloped" person is trapped in a system that prevents development, "only a personal transformation will make development work" (Karp 2002:93). Hence the importance of human development in most cooperation projects; by training African subjects in new techniques of production and management skills, African personhood is treated "as inert material to be transformed from outside" (Karp 2002:91). The moral judgements informing such ideas of what it means to be "developed" and "modern" are self-evident, conveying the notion that African personhood poses an obstacle to economic growth. Yet, the hegemonic concept of development has been the object of multiple appropriations and reinterpretations by local actors in Africa and beyond.

As argued by Lorenzo Bordonaro (Bordonaro 2009) with reference to young boys living on the island of Bubaque in Bijagó region, the notion of modernity is translated into local language by the Kriol concept of *desenvolvimento* (development). The latter term, a keyword both of post-independence national rhetoric and international cooperation discourse, is reworked and appropriated by young people as a rhetorical tool in order to intervene against traditional leaders in the villages. Focusing on its local use, Bordonaro observed how "the logic of *desenvolvimento* has been turned into a means for exerting social demands against traditional authorities, and an idiom to express frustration, needs, and aspirations" (Bordonaro 2009:71). Indeed, the dualism between "village tradition" and "urban modernity" was a constant not only in the colonial rhetoric of "civilizing", but also in the nationalist ideology underlying the liberation war and the later, post-colonial state, resulting in a lasting stigmatization of rural ways of life. As illustrated by Bordonaro, this developmentalist ideology is currently employed by young men living in the *praça* (town) of Bubaque, to distinguish themselves from the village population and contest the authority of their elders. While picturing themselves as *desenvolvido* (developed), they stigmatize relatives living in the villages "as backward, underdeveloped, uncivilized, locked in an ancestral past" (Bordonaro 2009:77). Actually, *kusa di kultura* (that is, the way of life associated with the village) not only limits young people's chance to develop themselves (*desenvolvi*), but also obstructs the "evolution" of the entire archipelago. One of the pillars of modernization theory, underlying the policies of the post-colonial Guinean state and international cooperation, is the supposed causal relationship between the spread of education and socioeconomic development. Accordingly, education is a crucial element of the local notion of development. However, far from being recognized as a concrete factor of "modernization" in the islands, school attendance is, rather, a strategy amongst young people to distinguish themselves from the culture of the village: "for attaining a new form of social prestige and formulating a modern, urban identity" (Bordonaro 2009:81). This strategy of distinction needs to be understood against the background of the age-based social structure of traditional Bijagó society. As Bordonaro observed, the main social distinction in the village is between young men (*iamgbá*, the children) and elders (*iakotó*). Within this framework, juniors must respect the seniors and share their goods with them until they also achieve the status of elder, through a complex system of age-grades and age-classes.

Therefore, in Bordonaro's view, the recurrent opposition between *kultura* and *desenvolvimento* within the discourses of young men in Bubaque should not be understood as the reflection of a hegemonic ideology or an example of the colonization of consciousness. On the contrary, it should be interpreted as "a problem of tactical self-representation in a power-saturated arena", marked by a long-standing generational tension (Bordonaro 2009:82). At the same time, the youth-elder opposition, emerging in young people's discourses, "must be thought of as an articulation between the dualities implied in the idea of modernity and the village social stratification based on age." (Bordonaro 2009:84).

The Kriol notion of *desenvolvimento* is a recurrent narrative within Guinean Evangelical churches as well. *Desenvolvimento das comunidades* (community development) is a new subject recently introduced in the course of theology at the Instituto Bíblico of the Igreja Evangélica da Guiné-Bissau (see chapter 1). As explained by Pastor Joaquim Correia, one of the most influential leaders of the Guinean Evangelical community,

> For several years, the Igreja Evangélica operated exclusively for evangelical work and the establishment of the church. But the church felt the need take a greater role in leading people, communities, to work for their own development, starting from the resources that the community has. That is why this subject was introduced in the school curriculum [...]. And students learn how a church can help the community in which it is based to get *the basic things a community should have*. And they could not stand waiting for the government, because there are so many communities in Guinea, and the Government does not always think of them all. So if each community hurries up and does the least it can, so who knows, maybe the Government will remember them, because they are doing something. [...]
>
> Let's start with food security: the country is an agricultural country, it is able to develop, but there is no one *to teach people to do things as they should do*. For example to produce what should be produced, because today everyone is involved in cashew and cashew nut production, but there is rice, there is corn, there are peanuts, there are other things that can be grown as well, that people are not farming any more. And there is the breading of animals, e.g. cattle, chickens, pigs, that could be raised, and people do not know how to do this. So the church can teach; it can bring experts to

> teach people how to do it, especially how to fight pests and provide good nutrition. And this will help the community to improve their diet, and also to have resources to solve problems [...] that may occasionally arise.
>
> Another example: to enable the community to have its own school. We have a village called Sara, where we sent four young people, and these four youngsters are in Sara working together with the community. Firstly they went with no money, with nothing, they went there to talk with the community, sensitize the community, and together with the community they decided to create a school. And now there is a school, starting from kinder-garden until high school. Now they are also working with ladies in teaching literacy, and have the support of the Ministry of Education for the whole process. And now they are [...] also discussing with the Government to see how to repair the road linking the *tabanca* (village) with the main street. There are more things that the community does, and the church can serve as a guide so they can do the least.

As I showed in chapter 1, social action has been a key element in the work of Evangelical churches over the last decade, both in Guinea-Bissau and in the diaspora. According to many Evangelical leaders, this social concern is consistent with the shift from the outworldly stance that marked the early age of the Guinean Protestant community, to the inworldly attitude associated with the appearance of the Evangelical minority on the public scene since the civil war (1998-99). Yet social action was not absent in the activities of early missionaries. As confirmed by both oral and recorded history, the Missão Evangélica established several clinics and schools in the areas where it was carrying out mission work. Therefore, the IEGB project of "building a school and a dispensary to the left of each new church" should be seen as a continuation and an intensification of a long-standing trend. Furthermore, this social activism can be situated in the context of a wider historical trend within Western Africa since the end of the Cold War. That is, the emergence of Christian and Islamic organizations, together with NGOs, as providers of social services in many countries of the region, following the withdrawal of post-colonial states from the social field (Piot 2010, see also chapter 7).

A crucial aspect of Evangelical narratives about *desenvolvimento* is the close association between socioeconomic "backwardness", "traditional" ways of life and animistic

religion. This connection evokes a recurrent theme in Amílcar Cabral's texts, asserting that progress and development will only be achieved when people are able to overcome the fear of nature inherent in local beliefs (Cabral 1974:52). A similar stance is evident in Evangelical sermons and everyday conversations: according to this narrative, the obligations associated with traditional practices are said to hinder development in rural areas. In fact, being subject to rules of reciprocity, the obligation to execute animal sacrifices in traditional ceremonies – especially those associated with funerals and other lifecycle rituals – hampers the accumulation of individual and family capital, in a social context where wealth comes from the ownership of cattle. Often, it is affirmed, families who do not have enough food to feed themselves are compelled to sacrifice all their cattle for a ceremony. It is according to this perspective that Pastor Joaquim Correia, in the extract cited above, emphasized the importance of teaching rural communities "to do things as they should do": that is, to farm and breed animals according to modern methods, in order to increase the productivity of land and increase the wealth of households. The ultimate goal would be the satisfaction of the basic needs of the community, which in his view should include a balanced diet, education, and roads connecting the inland villages to the capital. This standpoint implicitly expresses an opposition between Christianity, wellbeing and a modern way of life on one side, and animism, poverty and a traditional way of life on the other. The underlying idea is that Christianity will bring modernization. Ideally, when each Guinean is converted, the burden of ancestral practices and beliefs will cease to oppress the country, progress and peace will be achieved, and Guinea-Bissau will become a better place. In this sense, conversion is understood as a "total project" (Marshall 2009) involving all areas of human life, from individual and family wellbeing, to community development, to national politics.

Another parallel between Cabral's and Evangelical discourses about modernity is the overriding concern for education. The importance attached to pedagogic instruction is evident in Cabral's texts, as well as in PAIGC's efforts to build a new society in liberated areas during the colonial war. As highlighted by Patrick Chabal (1983) Cabral assigned education a key role in the creation of a political consciousness among Guinean villagers, as well as for the advent of the "*homem novo*" (new man), the subject-citizen of the future nation who emerged from the Liberation war (Chabal 1983). This is reflected in PAIGC's social policy during the war: whereas Portuguese rule had invested very little in health and education, PAIGC

established a basic system of health dispensaries and primary schools across the region under its control since the late 1960s.

Similarly, Evangelical discourses and practices stress the importance of literacy and schooling for the individual growth of the Christian person. This is especially evident in Jonas's story of conversion, reported in chapter 2. In his narrative, Jonas recalled how English, Scottish and American missionaries settled in the island of Uno, learning the Bigagó language and adapting themselves to the local way of life. As observed by Jonas, these missionaries (who according to oral history were mostly women), by "sharing food with us and identifying with our culture, were able to actually implant the Word, as well as the mentality to go to school". In reality, besides establishing several basic schools in Bijagó islands, missionaries encouraged new converts to send their children to the capital in order to complete their studies. To this purpose, they provided young believers with logistical support, helping them to find accommodation through Evangelical networks. Moreover, parents and children internalized the value of education, although the prolongation of studies was at odds with the needs of the local economy, which was largely based on the contribution of young people in agricultural work. As recalled by Jonas,

> When we were evangelized by the light of God's Word, we had the notion [of the importance of education], because we were living with European people who evangelized us, as school in Europe is so important. The teachings they gave also taught the importance of school. And our parents accepted […]. So these people taught us the importance of school, and insisted on sending us to school. It was difficult, because as I said my father had five children but there are parents who had twelve. People there live from agriculture. To cultivate a field you must have human resources, you need people for farming. And of course, parents had children in order to support, to help them. So it was on that basis that we had more opportunities to go to school than other communities. It is because of the Gospel, we had another mentality. There were missionaries who took the children from our parents to live with them, people moved to Bubaque with them, to Bissau with them, and studied.

As a result, according to Jonas, unlike what happened in other *tabancas*, by the 1970s in the Christian village of Ancarabe the vast majority of children and adolescents went to school, and many completed their studies.

Therefore, in the decades preceding Independence, both nationalist and Evangelical discourses appeared to converge on notions of modernity and development wherein economic progress was inextricably linked with education and public health. In spite of their differences, both narratives conveyed notions of social and personal regeneration, according to which development should be fostered by means of a transformation in human nature. Further, the views promulgated had practical consequences in terms of social services and ways of life. I will return to this topic in chapter 7. It is worth noting, however, that, despite the popular support for the nationalist project in the years of colonial war, the confidence of most Guineans in the modernist ideology of PAIGC ran aground in the post-colonial period. Indeed, the murder of Amílcar Cabral, the military regime of Nino Vieira and the subsequent collapse of the post-colonial state led to the failure of the nationalist dream in Guinea-Bissau. However, while the state has withdrawn from the social arena due to liberal reforms, NGOs and religious organizations – including Evangelical churches – are partially replacing it as providers of social services.

Hence, thanks to the timely action of international organizations, Islamic associations and Christian churches, the hope for modernization held by many Guineans appear to have survived. Yet, it should be noted that local notions about modernity are changing. If during the years of decolonization nationalist and Evangelical movements concurred in their conception of modernity as founded on literacy, public health and new farming techniques, today a new dimension has emerged in popular discourses about modernity within Evangelical churches. As I will try to argue in the following pages, this emergent aspect can be described as "the art of making connections".

Modernity as connectivity

Besides being an intermittent town, plagued by constant interruptions of water and power, Bissau is a place whose inhabitants are mostly excluded from information and communication technologies, as well as from connection to the web. In the city centre and adjacent areas there are few internet points, mostly frequented by students and young people keen to establish

links with the outside world. The only place where one can find a good internet connection is the Malaika Hotel in the *praça*, a reference point for European expatriates and members of the Guinean elite. As I observed in chapter 1, in Bissau most of functioning schools and medical clinics are managed by international and religious institutions. If health and education have been traditional fields of action of Evangelical churches, another kind of social service has started to appear in the last years.

In spring 2010, I started attending the Missão Evangélica Lusófona (MEL), the congregation that became my main case-study, and whose place of worship was located in the outskirts of Lisbon. I will describe in detail the features of this church, which is mainly attended by Guinean immigrants, in the following chapters. Besides the sections of the church dedicated to spiritual activities, MEL has a quite dynamic social action division, which is committed to implementing social initiatives in the neighbourhood where the church is established. However, Lisbon suburbs are not the only place where MEL is interested in performing social and evangelistic work. In 2010 MEL established a mission in Plack II, a neighbourhood in the outskirt of Bissau. When I started to frequent MEL, the church leaders were planning to build a social centre close to MEL's mission. Pastor Eliseu, the chief minister of MEL, immediately identified me as a potential fund-raiser, and asked me to collaborate in the planning of this project. Although there was still no sponsor, MEL's operational plan for Guinea-Bissau was quite comprehensive, including the implementation of social services, such as medical clinics dedicated to maternal and child health, and the construction of basic infrastructure, such as wells for supplying drinking water. However, according to the church directors the most urgent activity to be conducted was the construction of a community centre for young people in the suburbs of Bissau. I started working on this project, together with members of the social action department. We spent several days planning the project in detail, from the objectives up to the work plan, timetable and budget. The project, called "Big Hug Guinea-Bissau", was aimed at the creation of a community centre, providing educational, recreational and social activities to youth and children from the Plack II area. The idea was to build a space divided into seven rooms, each of them dedicated to a specific activity: literacy and school support; computer room and library; language courses (including Portuguese, English and French); handicraft workshop; warehouse for the distribution of food and clothes; and an auditorium for conferences and

meetings. Subsequently the creation of some basic infrastructure was also envisaged on the centre's premises, including a well for the provision of clean water and a photovoltaic power system.

If the supply of social services has been a common feature of Evangelical organizations working in Guinea-Bissau over the last decades, the novelty of this particular proposal, I think, lies in the centrality assigned to information technology and foreign languages. As emphasized in the text of the project,

> The need for a computer centre and a library for teenagers and young adults is imperative in the districts of Safi, Plack I, Plack II and surrounding areas. At the present time, the residents of these areas face many difficulties in obtaining facilities such as libraries, copy centres, and computer and internet services, which are generally located in the city centre. Another reason to offer these facilities locally relates to the importance of assisting residents in meeting their educational, work and business needs (among others), for which nowadays the use of information technology is essential. Computer courses will be aimed at children and teenagers from the target population. Here, participants will receive training that will equip them with better skills in the labour market, and consequently the ability to secure better living conditions […].
>
> Language learning is a vital factor for Guinean population in general, as Guinea-Bissau is surrounded by French-speaking countries (namely Senegal and Guinea Conakry). The proximity of Guinea-Bissau to countries whose official languages are French and English affects communication, so it is imperative to provide Guineans with language skills, enhancing their interconnection and cohesion with neighbouring populations.

The project was submitted to an Italian Evangelical institution of my acquaintance and – to my surprise – it received a funding. At the time of writing, due to bureaucratic delays related to political instability in the country, construction work has not yet begun. However, a plot of land has already been purchased, and the church directors were confident of finding further funding to begin work.

According to Eliseu, the opportunity to study and work outside the country is vital for young people living in Guinea-Bissau. In his view, it is thanks to migration that young people can "open their minds" and go back with another vision (*vison*). That is why Eliseu wants to "pull out young people", to help them "to come here [in Portugal], to Brazil, or elsewhere in the world, so that they can move". In his view, "youth are the future of our country", and if they cannot gain experience in other - more "developed" - countries, once back at home they could help their homeland emerge from its economic and political stagnation. Rather than being mere statements of intention, Eliseu's ideas are translated into concrete actions: thanks to his social network, including churches as well as public institutions across Guinea-Bissau, Portugal and Brazil, he can support the mobility of young believers in various ways, including through scholarships and accommodation.

In Guinea-Bissau, MEL is not the only church providing young believers with the global connections necessary to travel around the world. Indeed, MEL's projects and actions are part of a general trend involving the Bissau-Guinean Evangelical scene over the past twenty years. During my fieldwork, I heard a number of stories of people who used Evangelical networks in order to *sai fora* (go out). One of the most striking is the case of Carlito, who went to Israel with a trip organized by his church for an international conference. Significantly, like all his fellow travellers, Carlitos took advantage of this opportunity to stay in Israel, where he remained for five years as an illegal foreign worker. In this case, Carlitos and his friends took the initiative independently from the directors of the church. In other cases, Evangelical leaders are keen to act as mediators, by purchasing visa and scholarships through their local and global networks, for example. In one instance many believers succeeded in going to Brazil with a grant from a Biblical Institute. Once they obtained a degree in theology they decided to remain in Brazil to attend a secular graduate course. Some of them went back to Guinea-Bissau to carry out mission work or to lead a church; others are still abroad.

As James Ferguson persuasively pointed out, in contemporary Africa modernity is emerging as a "native category shared by an enormously heterogeneous population of natives" (Ferguson 200 6:177). This African discourse about modernity relates to a claim of membership of a wider world – a "longing for belonging" – a will to be connected and an aspiration to achieve "a social status implying certain institutional and economic conditions of

life" (ibid: 168). Despite their affinities with "imported" ideas about modernity, progress and development, the narratives about modernity which circulate in Guinean Evangelical circles take on peculiar connotations, depending on their use in specific contexts.

Guinea-Bissau has been often described as an out-of-the-way place, where modernity has been beyond the reach of most citizens for a long time, becoming an unattainable object of desire for many people, especially the younger generations (Gable 1995; Gable 1995; Bordonaro 2010; Bordonaro 2009). According to Sarró and de Barros, "many of the religious transformations the country has experienced in the last thirty years can be seen as indigenous ways to appropriate what people perceive as a modernity from which they feel unfairly excluded" (Sarró and De Barros forthcoming). At the same time, this fascination with modernity reflects the "extroversive" attitude that has characterised Guinea-Bissau for many centuries. The prophetic movement Kyang-Yang is an emblematic example of this religious appropriation of modernity. The Kyang-Yang was a Balanta religious movement created by the young prophetess Ntombikte in 1984, which reached its peak in the 1980s and gradually died out over the following decade. As described by Sarró and de Barros, it was a very syncretistic form of monotheism, mixing Muslim and Christian symbols and practices, as well as images of "modern" material culture, such as hospitals, schools, and airports. Through this set of mimetic practices, the authors noted, "it was as though Balanta farmers, aware of their growing marginalization from the Guinean public and political spheres (particularly acute in the early years of the 1980s) attempted, through conversion, to join a modern world they were explicitely expelled from" (Sarró and De Barros forthcoming:11).

In the last decade, the dying Kyang-Yang movement has been replaced by Pentecostalism and Islam in Balanta villages, especially among young people. This change is even more surprising if one considers that until recently the majority of Balanta villages were proudly animist. According to Sarró and de Barros, the success of world religions in Balanta regions can be ascribed to the social activism of religious organizations in areas where the Guinean state is increasingly absent. Hence, whereas the Kyang-Yang prophets expressed their wish to be modern in symbolic terms, these new religious organization offer a much more real connection with the modern world: "these two religions are seen today as local mechanisms to reach modernity and to be connected to a wider world" (Sarró and De Barros forthcoming:11). With regard to Pentecostalism it is worth noting that the rising presence of

Brazilian Pentecostal missions in the interior of the country, combining evangelization with health and social services, is often considered by local people to be development resource as well as offering the possibility of belonging to global networks. Moreover, in the imagination of many Guineans, Brazil is associated with an alternative model of development, free of colonialist connotations.

These new ways of modernising through religion have some common traits. Firstly, "they all share the notion that religion brings connection" (Sarró and De Barros forthcoming:12). In the view of rural and urban Guineans, access to international religious networks brings opportunities for physical mobility, as well as an improvement in living conditions. Secondly, it provides a reconfiguration of age and gender relations. Supported by churches and Islamic associations, women and young people may find easier ways to contest male and elder hegemony. Finally, religious communities play an important role in promoting new lexicons of love, individual autonomy and the nuclear family, in contrast with traditional patterns of conjugality and structures of kinship. However, the authors concluded, if universal religions appear particularly suited to pursue the desire for modernity in contemporary Guinea-Bissau, at the same time they constitute a new strategy for an old trend. Evangelical and Islamic faith fit into the new world order, characterised by an expansion of local horizons and increased intensity of connections, and a rise in mobility, at least for those most fortunate. In Horton's terms, the religions of the Book appear more suited to the present widening of former boundaries (Horton 1971). Yet extroversion has been a long-standing feature of the Guinean social environment, as has the tendency to establish alliances with broader worlds through religion. This drift to make connections took various forms over the course of Guinean history, ranging from the incorporation of strangers according to the landlord-stranger pattern, to the predilection to belong to patronage networks in urban settings. As noted by Jaqueline Knörr and Wilson Trajano Filho, this feature is reflected in the Kriol concept of *koitadi*:

> Borrowed from the Portuguese *coitado* (a poor person), it changed its meaning in the Creole milieu. In Bissau, a *koitadi* is no longer an individual who is (economically) poor, but a person who has no ties of belonging – who is socially poor, so to speak. Being a *koitadi* is considered the worst fate possible and an individual is considered a full person only when belonging to the relevant corporate groups of the respective community(Knörr and Filho 2010:10).

The topic of connections brings me back to Quintino's story. While I was listening to his biography, one of the aspects that caught my attention was his perseverance in claiming Portuguese nationality, which led him to live in Portugal for more than five years. What was striking to me was that he did not want the documents in order to work in Portugal, nor to live there. Indeed, he always repeated that after obtaining a Portuguese passport, he would go back to Bissau. Due to his old age and his pastoral responsibility (his "commitment to God", as he said), he had no intention of establishing himself in Portugal. Even the congregation that he founded in Lisbon was only a temporary project for him, and the directors of the church in Bissau had already selected a minister to replace him when he secured the much longed-for document. Certainly, he hoped to obtain a pension from the Portuguese state – to which he was entitled due to the injuries he suffered during the war -, but I doubt that this was his main motivation for staying, given the low chances to get entitled to it. Besides the desire of recognition for his role on the side of Portugal, I think that what drove him to stay has something to do with his strong desire to be "connected". As a senior leader of the Evangelical community, the freedom to move in order to make and maintain contacts and international relationships was vital for him, while he could not accept the restrictions exerted by the Portuguese migration authority.

In this sense, Quintino's attitude reveals a central dimension of contemporary attitude towards mobility. As Francesco Vacchiano has recently observed, mobility – together with consumption and "self-stilization" – constitutes a structuring dimension of contemporary subjectivity. These central values of the "contemporary being-in-the-world" are moulded upon a set of hegemonic models which are increasingly widespread, nurturing the aspirations of people and the sense of "being modern" (Vacchiano 2014). In a world which is increasingly connected – albeit selectively so – increasing numbers of people are feeling trapped in the place where they live, and "the sense of imprisonment is even stronger insofar it contrasts with the freedom of those who have the right to move. The selective image of the 'lucky migrant' is […] associated with the one of other key figures who embody the differential power of movement: country's elites, tourists, businessmen, athletes, etc." (Vacchiano 2014:67). Actually, this "differential power" between those who can move and those who are "confined" is not only a representation, but the outcome of a precise strategy of

selective mobility, implemented by the policies and technologies of contemporary "border regimes". "In a moving world […], immobilization is perceived as one of the most profound injustices", and the assertion of the right to move appears as a "challenge to an unjust and oppressive social order, a claim to belonging and a demand for 'global citizenship'" (Vacchiano 2014:81). In this sense, Quintino's perseverance in claiming Portuguese nationality represents his firm will to achieve a higher status, one which will give him the right to circulate and, ultimately, be connected.

Chapter 4
The Missão Evangélica Lusófona in the Portuguese Religious-scape

In the previous chapter I explored the reasons behind the appeal of Evangelical Christianity for Guinean believers, focusing on the association between Evangelical narratives and local discourses about modernity. In this chapter, I will start getting towards the central part of my thesis, that is, the ethnography of MEL as an example of an African Christian congregation in the diaspora. In the following pages, the wider Evangelical Guinean community in Lisbon will be portrayed against the background of the Portuguese religious landscape, with a special focus on the metropolitan area of Lisbon. Then, I will focus on the case of MEL, describing its history, organization and social setting, as well as its social actions in the neighbourhood where it is settled.

Just like Joshua

Eliseu Gomes was born in 1969 in Bissau, into a Papel family[1] of Evangelical faith. Together with his relatives, he attended the Igreja Evangélica de Belém, a branch of the Igreja Evangélica da Guiné-Bissau located in the Bairro Caracol, a central district of the capital. As a young member of that congregation, he has grown under the spiritual guidance of Pastor Quintino[2]. In his childhood he attended the Sunday school[3], and according to the evangelical tradition he was baptized as a teenager. As a young adult, Elias began teaching in Sunday school, where he discovered an inclination for educational work. Meanwhile, he was working with the kids of the neighbourhood, giving them "Boas Novas" (good news) lessons[4] during their holydays. At the age of twenty, he sank an existential crisis, which threw him into a deep

[1] The Papel is an ethnic group native of Bissau region. Although the town of Bissau is nowadays a multiethnic context, the Papel is still one of the larger groups in the area (see chapter 2).
[2] See chapter 2.
[3] A Sunday school is an institution designed to teach people, usually children, about Christianity. Based on the study of the Bible, it is traditionally yield on Sunday after the service, but it can also take place on other days of the week.
[4] Boas Novas is the name of specific sessions of Christian education, generally given to non-evangelical children in holy days time.

depression: he could not continue his studies, he was unable to maintain any stable love relationship, and he had problems with his family. He was feeling stuck, and he did not understand why. Meanwhile, he attended a training to become a worker[5] at the JOCUM mission[6]. Here, one day a Brazilian missionary prophesied that he will become a Pastor in the future. Although he was very impressed with this prediction, at the time he did not feel any vocation. From that moment on, however, while reading the Bible he frequently stumbled in the history of Jonah, who was sent by God to prophesy the destruction of Nineveh but tried to escape the divine mission (Jon. 1-4). Later, Eliseu began to hear an inner voice, calling him to yield to the will of God. Finally he capitulated: he felt clearly his pastoral vocation, and he realized that his mission was to bring spiritual support to his fellow citizens who had migrated to Europe. Afterwards he interpreted this troubled moment of his life as a God's call, as the Lord would have carried him across that deep crisis just to prepare the ground for his change of life:

> Once I sat under a tree to read the passage that they [the JOCUM missionaries] told us to meditate, it was Joshua chapter 1. The Word that touched me very strongly was when God told to Joshua that nobody can resist all the time of his life. And God said: "Like I did with Moses, so it will be with you". […] It was as if God was talking to me, not with Joshua. How many times I tried to swerve to work a lifetime for God. I wanted to spend my time doing my job, strolling, serving God otherwise. But God did not want that, he wanted me to deliver fully to Him (Pastor Eliseu).

With the help of some Portuguese Evangelical missionaries, Eliseu obtained a visa to study theology in Portugal. In 1994 he arrived in Lisbon. His sister, who had previously moved to Lisbon for work reasons, lodged him in her house. Here he attended the Biblical Institute Monte Esperança (affiliated to the Assemblies of God) and was finally consecrated as a

[5] Generally, the members of Evangelical congregations are divided into workers (*obreiros* in Portuguese) and simple believers (*crentes*). The first group include the most active members, who play roles of internal organization or outwards evangelization. A worker is not necessarily consecrated, but he/she should attend a training course.

[6] JOCUM (Jovens Com Uma Missão) is the Brazilian branch of the YWAM (Youth With A Mission). This international Christian organization had a base in Gabu, in the eastern region of Guinea Bissau, where meetings, training and spiritual retreats directed to young Christians were held, under the supervision of Brazilian missionaries.

Pastor. In 1996 his girlfriend came from Bissau to join him, and in 1997 the couple got married. In 1998 his wife gave birth to a girl. In this period, together with his wife he joined a congregation belonging to the Igreja de Deus in Portugal (IDP). Then the supervisor of the IDP Carlos Boaventura – who was his teacher at the Bible Institute - invited him to be the assistant Pastor in the IDP church in Odivelas. Since he came in Portugal, he had started to assemble a few believers of African origin, mostly coming from Guinea-Bissau. They held prayer groups in private homes. His goal was to carry out a new mission, especially directed to African migrants and their children. He had noticed that many African believers were not able to integrate into Portuguese congregations. In fact, although natives and migrants shared an Evangelical creed, African Christians lived their religious experience in a different way, and they often felt unwelcomed by their brothers in faith.

> There are many people today who ended up not going to church because of this situation, many [...]. Even when I got here I felt this very strongly. When I got there [in a church near my home] the pastor of the church received me very well. I had that hunger, that desire to have friends. Because when I left Guinea I left thousands of friends. I came here and I just wanted to make friends. For us, there in Bissau, when a new person come, we give full attention to that person, and I thought it was so in Portugal as well. But when I entered the church I was sitting on the bench, and people went ahead and did not stay with me. After the service they all fled. Every day after the worship I stayed alone.

Finally he received the permission from the IDP direction to establish a new congregation. On 28th September 2002, together with a small group of African believers, he founded the Missão Evangélica Lusófona (MEL), belonging to the IDP and located in the Vale do Forno neighbourhood, in the outskirts of Lisbon.

Religious Plurality in Portugal

Before going into the description of MEL's history, organization and social setting, I would like to give a brief sketch of Portuguese religious landscape, with a special focus on the

metropolitan area of Lisbon. In this paragraph I will describe the emerging forms of religious plurality[7] in Portugal, despite the enduring prevalence of Catholicism in this country.

As recalled by José Mapril and Ruy Blanes (2013), in 2003 the European Commission debated the possibility of producing a European Constitution with a specific reference to Christianity as its religious heritage. The proposal raised much criticism due to its exclusivist and discriminatory position. On the one hand, it can be interpreted as an attempt to find a common identity despite all the conflicts and differences within the EU – divergences which eventually resulted in the failure of the constitutional project. On the other, it may be read as the sign of a larger phenomenon: the increasing visibility of religion in the European public arena. Especially, controversies about the public exposure of religious minorities have been focused on Islamic communities formed by migrant groups. It is the case of the popular opposition to mosque building in many countries, as well as the debate on Islamic dress in France. However, disputes involving the claims to space of new Christian churches have also received some level of public attention, as in the case of the founding of the Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus in Portugal (Mafra 2002). These debates must be placed on the background of the increasing religious plurality in Europe, largely produced by contemporary human movements. These changes have been felt with particular intensity in southern European countries, which in the last decades, due to global migratory dynamics, evolved from countries of emigration to countries of immigration (Blanes and Mapril 2013) . Indeed, the emergence of the debate on the "Christian roots" of Europe at the very moment in which the European religious landscape is becoming more and more plural shows the political scope of this matter. Despite the calls to the common Christian origins we are living in a time when, as pointed out by Ramon Sarró, "the idea of a single, united Europe with one tradition and one religious heritage is a remote heterotopy for everybody" (Sarró 2013: 386). However, we can not assume that religious diversity is a novelty in Europe. Despite the repression of minorities, religious plurality was historically present even in a country, like Portugal, which has built its identity on Catholicism.

[7] Following Steffen Dix, I prefer to use the expression 'religious plurality' rather than 'religious pluralism'. As observed by the author, "(religious) pluralism cannot be based on the mere admission of a multitude of religions, understood to be the simple enrichment of a 'multicultural' society, but rather on the capacity to introduce at a societal level some religious options that are completely foreign to the cultural inheritance itself" (Dix 2009:182). Accordingly, as "(religious) pluralism differs from plurality in its active conduct" (Dix 2009:182) , the latter term appears more limited to the mere observation of religious diversity.

From a religious perspective, over the last centuries Portugal was, and still remains, "a monolithic country" (Vilaça 2006), grounding its national identity on Catholicism. However, it has not always been so. As pointed out by Steffen Dix, "religious history reveals that the systematic Christianization of Iberia (and in our case especially Portugal), or the fusion between national and Catholic identity, only began after the Inquisition. Before this and for a long time after the Inquisition and Counter-Reformation, there was a certain multiplicity of religious options that have continued to this day" (Dix 2008:63). In particular, the Muslim domination of Portugal during the Middle-Ages - which lasted five centuries, starting in 716 with the conquest of the whole peninsula to the fall of Faro in 1249 – was marked by a high degree of religious diversity, as well as a relative religious tolerance. Pagan beliefs persisted in rural areas, and large Jews and Christian communities coexisted with the Muslim occupants, enjoying a certain degree of religious and civic freedom. The marks of this long-lasting Arab presence are still visible in many Portuguese words, as well as in place names, architectural heritage, and in the physical features of many people.

However, this early form of "religious pluralism" ceased with the Christianization of Iberia, and with the religious policy of the rising monarchy (Dix 2008:70). However, Muslim and Jewish communities continued to live in Portugal under the new Christian rulers, subjected to a growing spatial segregation[8] and periodic outbreaks of violence by the Christian population, especially in the case of Jews. Yet, religious coexistence slowly disappeared, with the Catholic Church increasingly asserting doctrines against Jews, pagans, and Muslims. This trend culminated in 1496, when King Manuel I (1469–1521), seeking the religious and political unity of the kingdom, signed a decree to expel Jews and Muslims from Portugal. As a consequence, non-Catholics who wished to stay were forced to convert. Finally, between 1536 and 1565 the Inquisition completed national homogenization, repressing the incipient emergence of Protestantism, and wiping out the remaining Jewish and Muslim communities[9] (Dix 2008). From this moment, the Roman Catholic Church gradually consolidated its religious monopoly in Portugal. However, its hegemony did not necessarily imply a total correspondence between official Catholic doctrines and popular religiosity,

[8] Muslim and Jewish were compelled to live in urban ghettoes called *Mourarias* and *Judiarias*.

[9] The Muslims and Jewish who were forcedly converted to Christianity were called *Cristãos-novos* (new Christians). As reported by Steffen Dix, "independently of the received baptism, of the change of name, or of the open acceptance of Christian rituals, many of these New Christians retained their former religious customs" (Dix 2008: 72).

which appears to have been "a great deal more plural […] than at first sight" (Dix 2008:74). On the one side, ancient pagan practices and beliefs survived in popular and rural spirituality, under the guise of witchcraft, sorcery, and divination arts. On the other side, in the wake of oversees discoveries, Portugal became a global empire "with an unmistakable religious plurality to be traced in the various forms of syncretism in its colonial territories" (Dix 2008:76), where Catholicism coexisted with an extreme variety of spiritual traditions, including Islam and local religions.

In the metropolis, a relatively monolithic religious order reigned up to the second half of the nineteenth century, when some small religious minorities appeared again, mainly of Protestant and Evangelical background. The emergence of these communities was enhanced by two factors. On the one hand, the so-called liberal revolution in 1820 gave some sign of opening in the religious field: besides the extinction of Inquisition in 1821, the Constitution of 1826 forbade the persecution for religious reasons. However, Catholicism was declared the "Religion of the Kingdom", and the freedom of worship was limited to private spaces. On the other hand, in the wake of the Evangelical revival of the nineteenth century, various missionaries travelled from Britain, USA, Brazil and Spain to work in Portugal. Nonetheless, until the second half of the twentieth century the Evangelical community remained extremely small and marginal, limited to urban and economically dynamic areas, and mostly formed by foreign believers (Vilaça 2006)[10]. As observed by Helena Vilaça, the marginalization of this early community was fostered by the prevalence of a Puritan and Pietist wing, which followed an outwardly attitude and created a closure in relation to the external environment. At the same time, the expansion of the Evangelical minority was hindered by lasting restrictions on religious freedom. During the first Republic, established in 1910, there was no progress towards greater freedom, due to the anticlerical and secularist environment, unfavourable to all forms of religious expression. This anticlerical phase was marked by a strong conflict between State and Church, but lasted only one decade, as the military dictatorship which started in 1926 promoted reconciliation with the Catholic Church. Actually, Salazar's Estado Novo considered Catholicism as the moral ground of the Portuguese nation. The alliance

[10] The first Protestant churches established in Portugal were the Methodist Church in Porto (1871), the Baptist Church in Porto (1888), the Episcopal Church (later Igreja Lusitana) in Lisbon (1839), the Congregational Church in Lisbon (1880), and the Igrejas dos Irmãos (Darbistas) in Lisbon (1877) (Vilaça 2006).

between State and Church was consolidated with the Concordat of 1940[11]. In 1935, despite the ban on the public manifestations of non-Catholic religious minorities, the Portuguese Evangelical Alliance was founded. The birth of such an organization and of the holding ofvarious interdenominational meetings testifies to the existence of a strong sense of unity within the Evangelical world, which surpassed denominational divergences and constructed its identity in opposition to the Catholic majority.

In terms of religious diversity, a turning point was the establishment of democracy in Portugal in 1974, which paved the way for the enlargement of pre-existing minorities and the proliferation of new religious movements. On the one hand, the democratic regime and the Constitution of 1976 asserted the freedom of expression and worship, fostering a gradual opening of the legal framework on this subject. On the other hand, the end of the dictatorship generated a set of radical transformations in the Portuguese society, turning Portugal, traditionally a country of emigration, into a destination for immigration. These changes gradually endorsed the pluralisation of the religious field. Firstly, the end of Portuguese colonialism gave way to a migrant flow form the ex-colonies, formed of both Portuguese and ex-colonized citizens. Then, the entrance of Portugal into the European Union in 1986 and the economic boom which followed attracted further migrant waves, not only from the ex-colonies, but also from Eastern Europe and other countries, such as Brazil, China, and Bangladesh.

Hence, the carnation revolution indirectly led to "a diversification and increase in the market for religious goods" (Vilaça 2008:193) . In the non-Catholic world, the Evangelical population remained a "majority within the minority" (Vilaça 2008:197). However, the churches that experienced a larger expansion were those of Pentecostal and Neopentecostal inspiration, whereas the pre-existent Protestant churches underwent a relative stabilization. The former group includes the Igreja Evangelica Cigana - later called Igreja Evangelica Fiiladélfia em Portugal – born in the gipsy cultural context (Blanes 2008); the Igreja Maná, founded in 1984 by a Portuguese, and having a great expansion throughout the world; and the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, born in Brazil in the 1970s and brought to Portugal in 1989. These two denominations have been marked by a rapid expansion in the last decades, especially in urban and suburban settings, gaining members mostly among Brazilian and

[11] See chapter 1 for the consequences in the Portuguese colonies.

African migrants, but also among native Portuguese. Moreover, the migration flows from the former colonies led to the birth of the first Islamic communities in the 1970s, originally formed by people coming from Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau, but now including many migrants from Pakistan and Bangladesh (Mapril 2012).

This progressive pluralisation of the Portuguese religious landscape, intensified in the last two decades, is proved by statistical data. The analysis of recent censuses reveals that the categories of 'Protestants' and 'other Christians' - Evangelicals not recognizing the Reformation – together, remain the most significant religious minority in alternative to Catholicism (Vilaça 2006), followed by "Orthodox", "other non-Christians", "Islam", and a narrow Jewish minority. Compared with the permanent hegemony of the Roman Catholic Church, the numbers of all the other religious groups remain relatively low (Dix 2009). Nonetheless, as noted by Helena Vilaça (2006), all the non-Catholic categories grew constantly in the last decades of the twentieth century, excluding Jews. The last census confirms the permanence of a large majority of Catholics (81 %), while only 3.8% of the population identified with non-Catholic religious groups, with 6.8% declaring to have no religion (INE 2011)[12].

On the issue of religious freedom and the impact of religious diversity on Portuguese public opinion, it is worth mentioning the debate which followed the establishment of the Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus[13] (IURD) in the 1990s. Few years after its founding on Portuguese soil (1989), this group gained remarkable public visibility, due to its strong evangelizing action, its success in attracting believers, and its strategy of presence on the public space and the media. In particular, the latter element – involving purchase of public spaces in central urban areas, acquisition of radio stations and use of TV channels for the dissemination of its message - raised some conflicts with some sectors of the public opinion close to the Catholic hierarchies (Mafra 2002; Vilaça 2006). These events had the effect to bring to the fore the issue of religious freedom, impelling social actors to express their opinion on the public scene, and engendering a dialogue about the right to worship and the legal framework on the matter (Mafra 2002). This debate, which involved not only the IURD,

[12] These data confirm the tendency towards a slow but constant diversification of the religious field, if compared with the previous census: in 2001, Catholics were more than 84% of the population, religious minorities (including the other Christian denominations together with non-Christian religious groups) were at 2.48%, and non-believers were at 4% (INE 2001).
[13] Universal Church of the Kingdom of God.

but many other religious groups, as well as public institutions and the media, had a crucial role in the process that led to the proclamation of the Lei de Liberdade Religiosa (June 2001) and the revision of the Concordat (May 2004). Following the model of other European countries – such as Italy and Spain – Portugal opted to retain a privileged relationship with the Catholic Church, and to celebrate separate agreements with different denominations or associations of religious entities. The law states that religious communities, individually or in association, may acquire a legal status, implying a set of rights in terms of tax exemption, religious training, social communication and religious assistance in armed forces, jails and hospitals. Ironically, the IURD remained excluded from such regulation. As pointed out by Helena Vilaça, "although the new law revels an equality of rights never before achieved by religious minorities in Portuguese society, […] mechanisms to neutralize the most competitive religious groups in the religious market in Portugal were created, excluding religious groups which were implanted less than thirty years ago, or sixty in the countries abroad, from privileged relationships with the State" (Vilaça 2006:155).

These events confirm the enlargement of the minority universe as a whole, as well as its internal diversification. At the same time, they show how the media are currently playing a crucial role in re-centring religion in the public sphere, despite the process of secularization that, according to some, would be the hallmark of modern societies (Casanova 1994; Vilaça 2006). A final important aspect of the Portugal religious landscape is its spatial diversification. As noted by Helena Vilaça, religious plurality is particularly evident in urban areas and in the south of the country, whereas in northern rural areas Catholic hegemony is more pronounced. Among urban areas, the cosmopolitan region of Lisbon stands for its religious diversity, presenting a profile close to other Central and Northern European urban areas. As remarked by Steffen Dix, "we can ascertain that religious variety in Greater Lisbon and its surroundings is considerably more pronounced than it is in the rest of the country" (Dix 2009:184). Besides having been the scene of many encounters between different religious traditions over the centuries – including Islam, Judaism, and various forms of Christianity – in the last decades it has turned into a central hub in the global network of human mobility, a transformation which furthered its cultural and religious diversification.

In the last years, many scholars have conducted ethnographic research about the new religious groups and movements which emerged in the wake of the increasing presence of

migrants in the metropolitan area of Lisbon. Although there is not space here to review them in detail, I would like to mention the monograph of Clara Mafra on IURD (Mafra 2002) ; that of José Mapril on Muslim migrants from Bangladesh (Mapril 2012); the articles of Ramon Sarró and Ruy Blanes on the Kimbangwist and Tocoist prophetic Churches frequented by Angolan migrants (Sarró and Blanes 2008; Sarró and Blanes 2009; Sarró and Blanes 2010); the articles of Clara Saraiva on the traditional religious practices of Guinean migrants (2008) and on Afro-Brazilian associations (2013); the inquiry of Helena Vilaça on Orthodox migrants from Eastern Europe (Vilaça 2008). Despite the relevance of these studies, there is still much work to be done on the emergent religious plurality in Portugal, and especially in Greater Lisbon. As Ramon Sarró and Ruy Blanes have pointed out, the city of Lisbon is today an emblematic case of "religious contact" that is, "a religious hinge between European lands and Atlantic waters, a bridge between old beliefs and new missionaries, an axial town, a privileged platform for debating what today means to be 'European', 'African', 'Brazilian', 'Atlantic' or 'Christian'" (Sarró and Blanes 2008:52).

Walking in a Heathen Town

Guinean citizens form one of the larger foreign groups in Portugal. I will examine the social features of this group, as well as the historical circumstances of its emergence, in the next chapter. For the moment, I would like to focus on its religious contours, and especially on that "minority within a minority" constituted by the Evangelical Guinean community in Greater Lisbon.

In a survey performed by Fernando Luís Machado among Guinean migrants living in Portugal in 1995, the majority of the sample declared to be Catholic (62%). Only a minority identified themselves as Muslim (18%), while 6% affirmed to have other religious affiliations and 11% said to have no religion (Machado 2002:249). These data are striking if compared with the situation in the country of origin, where Islam and local religions are the two major confessions, while Christianity is a minority[14]. According to Machado, these numbers should

[14] According to official statistical data, in 1979 35% of the Guinean population was Muslim, 60% practiced indigenous religions and 5% was Christian (Machado 2002). The 2009 census showed an enormous growth of Christianity (now at 22%), an increase in Islam (45%) and a decline in local religions (15%). While in the first years following Independence the Evangelical minority was statistically irrelevant, since the 1990s it experienced an important growth (see chapter 1)

be ascribed to the "selective nature" of the migration between Guinea-Bissau and Portugal, which would have privileged the urban and middle-class layers of the population. In particular, most Guinean migrants living in Portugal would come from the "Creole society" of Guinea-Bissau (Trajano Filho 2010), mostly settled in urban areas and deeply influenced by the Portuguese Catholic matrix, although syncretised with local practices (Trajano Filho 2010; Sarró and De Barros forthcoming). Hence, while Guinean migrants are often associated with Islam in Portuguese media and public opinion, in 1995 the majority of Guinean migrants surveyed by Machado declared to be Catholic. This is a fact. However, such self-definition should be not interpreted in the sense of a strict adherence of these believers to the official Catholic doctrine. Actually, as demonstrated by the article of Clara Saraiva (2008) local religions are also practiced by many Guinean migrants in Lisbon. Following a widespread pattern in their homeland, most Guinean migrants would maintain a dualistic affiliation, conciliating a more or less regular attendance to Catholic worship with occasional involvement in traditional practices, especially at life crisis or lifecycle ceremonies. As observed by Clara Saraiva, Guinean religious healers living in Lisbon, their clients, and the spirits involved in their rituals, would "become transnational characters in a complex set of relations originally established between the living and the dead in Africa" (Saraiva 2008:254; see also Quintino 2004 and chapter 5).

Within this diasporic context, Guinean Evangelical believers are apparently an exception. As I showed in the previous chapters, Guinean Evangelicals seem to be much less involved in animistic practices than their Catholic fellow citizens. This is probably even truer in the diaspora, where traditional religious specialists and ritual objects from the homeland are more difficult to find, and traditional ceremonies more expensive, as they often must be performed in Guinea-Bissau and require expensive journeys. Hence, the Evangelical community appears as a separate group within the Guinean diaspora, with specific social networks which seldom intersect with Muslim and Catholic connections.

In her pioneer work on African Christians in the Netherlands, Gerrie Ter Haar distinguished four categories of African Christian communities: 1) the fully independent churches which were founded in the host country; 2) the congregations which uphold links with a church in the homeland; 3) the African religious communities which belong to a world-

wide organization (such as the Roman Catholic Church); 4) the pre-existing local churches which are frequented in number by Africans (Ter Haar 1998; Cox and Haar 2003).

In the case of Guinean Evangelicals in Lisbon, I could not find independent churches which were founded in Portugal without any link with local, Guinean or transnational organizations. By contrast, I could identify four types of religious itineraries, corresponding to "collective strategies of integration and participation" (Sarró and Blanes 2010:147). The first itinerary is the individual participation in local branches of international churches, as in the case of IURD, Igreja Maná, or the Assemblies of God, or in Portuguese Evangelical churches, such as the Igreja Lusitana or Igreja Filadélfia de Feijó. The latter is a congregation located in the Peninsula de Setúbal (on the other side of the Tagus River) and is led by a Guinean minister, Pastor Apolinário Silva. Pastor Apolinário came in Portugal as a student in the early-1990s, and like Pastor Eliseu he attended the Bible Institute Monte Esperança. Later he joined the Igreja Filadélfia (IF), a Portuguese denomination which separated itself from the Assemblies of God in 1989, where he began to assume pastoral responsibilities. In 2002 he was assigned to the IF's congregation in Feijó, in the southern outskirt of Lisbon (the so-called Margem Sul). At the time when he became a minister there, all the members were Portuguese. As he stated, he was the only "coloured person". At first, he had to overcome some racial prejudice, but later he succeeded in gaining the confidence of his flock. As he affirmed, "the vision of our church is 'Christ to all nations', regardless of colour, language, race or culture. This is the vision of our church and the people are open. The proof is that later I was the only black, and we now have more than half a dozen Africans in our church". Nonetheless, the congregation is still prevalently Portuguese, and has around seventy members, with a pretty high mean age. Pastor Apolinário is actually married to a native Portuguese worshipper, who plays roles of responsibility in the church.

The second way is the participation in African communities within local congregations, belonging to Portuguese or international denominations, such as the Guinean community of the Igreja Baptista de Queluz, in a western suburb of Lisbon[15]. This community has a Guinean minister (Pastor Eusébio) and is totally formed by migrants from Guinea-Bissau. On Sunday morning the locales of the church are occupied by native Portuguese

[15] Queluz is a neighbourhood where many Guinean migrants live. It is located on the "Linha de Sintra", an area with a high concentration of African migrants, which is named after the railway line connecting the town of Sintra and other western suburbs with Lisbon, which facilitates the access to the city centre.

congregation, therefore the Guinean services are held in the afternoon, and are totally performed in Kriol language. The community has around fifty members.

The third mode is the attendance of congregations which maintain links with a church in Guinea-Bissau. I only identified one of such communities, but it is quite relevant. It is the Portuguese branch of the Igreja Evagélica da Guiné-Bissau, founded by Pastor Quintino and Pastor José-Paulo in 2011. At first, a small original group attended the Sunday worship in the Campo Grande garden. Later the congregation was lodged in the Assemblies of God's congregation of Benfica[16]. Also here the service is given in Kriol, as the whole church is formed by Guinean believers. The congregation grew steadily in the last years, having now a hundred members.

The fourth way consists in joining a church attended by African believers, which belong to a local or international organization. It is the case of the Missão Evangélica Lusofona, which constitutes my privileged case-study. I will describe in detail the congregation founded by Pastor Eliseu Gomes in the following pages. For now, it is sufficient to note that the church was born in 2002 within the IDP (the Portuguese branch of the Church of God), its members are mostly Guinean (but there are also Brazilian and Angolan) and their number runs around one hundred. The place of worship is located in Vale do Forno, a northern-western illegal suburb. As revealed by its name, the official language of the church is Portuguese.In addition to these strategies of integration into specific congregations, another aspect of Evangelical Guineans' religious agency is the affiliation to one of the various Evangelical associations existing in the area. These groups, sometimes formed by believers who were affiliated to the same congregation in Bissau, but not necessarily, perform various functions, ranging from the social field to the cultural and religious domain.

By way of example, I will describe the case of the Associação dos Crentes Evangélicos Guineenses em Portugal (ACEGP), probably one of the largest associations of this kind. The ACEGP was born in 1988 by a Portuguese missionary who had worked in Guinea-Bissau for many years. Its overall objective is to offer a context for meeting and sociability to Guinean migrants living in Portugal, where they can attend worships in Kriol language. In 2000 the association got legal status, recognized by the Portuguese government.

[16] Benfica is a working class neighbourhood in the first belt of Lisbon's outskirts, famous for the stadium of the homonymous football team.

I interviewed the ACEGP's president in 2010. At that time, the members numbered around one hundred, most living in greater Lisbon, but some coming from other regions. They belonged to a range of congregations referring to different Evangelical denominations, mostly the Baptist Church and the Assemblies of God, but also smaller ones. According to the president, the presence of different denominations was not a source of friction, as the association was seen by its members as a single body that brings together all Guinean Evangelical believers. Actually, he clarified, it was neither a church nor a network of churches, but an organization composed of believers from Guinea-Bissau affiliated with many different churches. Its members were following one of the various strategies of integration that I have mentioned. Most members belonged to churches attended by a majority of Portuguese natives, while others attended congregations whose membership had mixed origins. At the time of the interview, the only group which was exclusively formed by Guinean believers was the community belonging to the Baptist Church of Queluz.

From the outset, the association has met every first Saturday of the month. It is currently housed in the locales of the Igreja Presbiteriana in Anjos, in the heart of Lisbon. Sometimes it organizes outdoor events in the surroundings of the city. The meetings offer moments of social interaction, worships in Kriol, and sometimes seminars on topics of general interest, such as the role of women in the Evangelical world or the integration of migrants in Portugal. The official language is Kriol, although during open events Portuguese is used as well. Apart from organizing monthly meetings and special events, other activities of the association are the orientation of newcomers for their integration into a local church, and the logistical and material support to believers who came to Portugal for health reasons. The financial resources of these and other activities are the member's monthly quotas and the offerings at worship. The aims and activities of the association are thus not only religious but include the social sphere, responding to the spiritual as well as material needs expressed by its members.

Similarly to other associations of the same kind, the role of the ACEGP seems to be that of a broker between the believers coming from Guinea-Bissau and the local congregations existing on Portuguese soil, sometimes Portuguese-initiated and sometimes belonging to transnational networks, sometimes formed by a mainly native membership, sometimes attended by migrant believers of mixed origins. The ACEGP would help Guinean

believers to integrate into one of these churches – generally chosen on the ground of geographical proximity – offering at the same time a context where they could regularly merge in order to meet their fellow citizens, to strengthen their social networks, and finally to build their religious diasporic identity. At the same time, it would offer a self-help organization constituted on religious grounds, similar to other associations established by Guinean migrants of Catholic and Muslim faith (Quintino 2004). As observed by Quintino, these associations would follow a Guinean pattern of self-help organization called *abota* in Kriol, wherein small amounts of money are collected and redistributed to members in case of need. In Bissau, a*bota* associations are generally formed on the basis of neighbourhoods and age groups (Quintino 2004) .

Significantly, in the last years the number of ACEGP's members has decreased, maybe due to the emergence of churches explicitly directed to Guinean migrants and using Kriol as their official language, such as the church lead by Pastor Quintino. Apparently, churches like the Portuguese branch of the Igreja Evangélica da Guiné-Bissau or the Missão Evangélica Lusófona are partially overlapping these associations in their social, religious and identitarian functions. At the same time, as the existence of ACEGP is largely linked to the needs of those believers who congregate into non-Guinean communities, their social and cultural role is far from being accomplished.

The Missão Evangélica Lusófona: Social Setting and Organization

On 28th September 2002 Eliseu Gomes, together with a small group formed by seven African believers, founded the Missão Evangélica Lusófona. From the outset, the congregation has been affiliated to the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee), an international denomination having its headquarters in the USA, and referring to classic American Pentecostalism. The Portuguese branch of the Church of God, called Igreja de Deus em Portugal, was initiated in 1965. In 2010, the IDP had approximately three hundred and fifty members in total, worshiping in seven congregations, mostly concentrated in the Lisbon region. Currently, the overseer is Pastor Jaime Rosado, the minister of the Odivelas congregation.

As stated in its website, the Church of God is represented in one hundred and seventy countries, with over thirty-five thousand congregations around the globe. In 2004, its self-declared membership number was over six million people. According to David Edwin Harrel,

Jr. (1990), the Church of God would be the second largest American Pentecostal denomination, after the Assemblies of God. Its official doctrinal principles include: the inspiration and authority of the Word of God; the Trinity; the deity and virgin birth of Jesus Christ; the salvation by faith after the death of Christ; Christ's bodily resurrection and ascension to the right hand of the Father; the ministry of the Holy Spirit; the second coming of Christ; and the spiritual unity of believers in Jesus Christ. Being Pentecostal, the Church of God believes in speaking in tongues[17] as the initial evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. As charismatic, it accepts the current validity of the gifts conferred by the Holy Spirit, such as miracles, healing and prophecy[18].

There is a certain irony in the inclusion of the Missão Evangélica Lusófona (MEL) within the history of the Church of God (COG), a denomination having its origins in one of the more racist contexts of the recent global history: the southern states of the US of the nineteenth century. Actually, the movement was born in 1886, in the isolated mountains of Tennessee, at the border with North Carolina, from a handful of believers who seceded from Baptist and Methodist churches. An amendment of the constitution had prohibited slavery only few decades before, in 1865, but the social and economic structure of this southern state remained profoundly segregationist. The leaders of the early community developed their own version of the Pentecostal message independently from other groups wherein the movement emerged, such as the Apostolic Faith Mission lead by the Afro-American preacher William Seymour. Generally, the origins of the Pentecostal gospel are traced back to the first years of the twentieth century, when reverend William Seymour established an interracial congregation, having its place of worship at 312 Azuza Street, in a working class neighbourhood of Los Angeles (Anderson 2013). Despite their geographical, cultural and social distance, both these early Pentecostal experiences emerged in the climate of religious

[17] "Speaking in tongues" or "glossolalia" is one of the distinctive elements of Pentecostal doctrine. It is one of the charismas given by the Holy Spirit to the apostles in the New Testament episode of Pentecost (Acts 2). For the majority of recent Pentecostal groups, it corresponds to a large category of phenomena, which includes speaking in a foreign language and pronouncing verbal declamations not corresponding to any existing idiom. It expresses the wish to get a direct communication with God, not mediated by the current language. Most churches belonging to the classical Pentecostalism reckon speaking in tongues as the distinguishing sign of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. By contrast, charismatic groups insist on the work of the Holy Spirit through his gifts, during the life of individuals and communities.

[18] http://www.churchofgod.org/index.php/pages/church-of-god-is

ferment that marked the American Evangelical revival at the turn of the century[19]. Over time, the original COG community formed by marginal southern farmers evolved into a strong and large organization, as it expanded northward incorporating urban and middle-class believers. In the years following World War II the Church of God changed from an outwardly, ascetic and fundamentalist community into "a church within mainstream conservative evangelicalism" (Crews 1990). While in the first years it grew in isolation from other Protestant churches, in the post-war years the COG started a new course of denominational cooperation, joining the Pentecostal Fellowship of North America in 1948. At the same time, it gradually enhanced its social and political involvement, supporting "Christian" legislation and struggling to influence the national political agenda in the context of the American "religious right". Its approach to racial issues has evolved over time, while remaining aligned with the positions of the conservative right. Starting as a white-dominated community, in 1922 the COG General Assembly officially approved separation of the black and white congregations. As observed by Mickey Crews, "Like most southerners, Church of God members viewed the black man and his role in society through paternalistic eyes. They accepted discrimination and segregation of the races as a way of life – one that they believed had worked rather well" (Crews 1990:164). Only in 1966 the organization decided to promote integration and remove all racist references from its official documents. Although the black participation grew in the last decades, in the 1990s it did not exceed the 4% of the total COG membership in the United States.

The affiliation of a tolerant, "coloured" and welcoming community like MEL to such an organization may be ascribed to the "imponderable dimension" of contemporary global condition, which consents the existence of so deep differences between the centre and the margins of a transnational denomination like the Church of God. However, the conservative and implicitly segregationist features of this religious institution may have been at the origins

[19] In the last years of the nineteenth century, Methodist, Holiness, and other evangelical groups shared a drive to restore the spirit and the letter of early Christianity. Many of these movements were preaching perfectionist doctrines, according to which those who have received the 'sanctification' (also called 'second work of grace') could live a life free from sin, thus standing out from the mass of Christian people. Original Pentecostalism distinguished itself from other evangelical movements for the 'initial evidence' of the 'baptism of the Holy Spirit'. The latter was designed as an experience of spiritual rebirth after conversion, in which the believer would receive the Holy Spirit and his power. Anyone who experienced this event was considered to be 'born-again', to emphasize the transformation of the self caused by this intense spiritual experience. Although the practice of the baptism of the Holy Spirit was already widespread among various groups in the American Evangelical revival, the novelty introduced by Seymour is the belief that "glossolalia", or 'speaking in tongues', would be the evident sign of rebirth in the Spirit (Anderson 2013) .

of the willingness of its Portuguese directorate to allow the birth of MEL, and may also explain its present relative autonomy from the central hierarchies. As pastor Eliseu told me many times, his plan to establish a new congregation was directed to meet the spiritual, existential and social needs of the African Evangelical community, as well as to carry out missionary activity among the African migrants living in the suburbs of Lisbon. The founding members identified the Vale do Forno neighbourhood as a proper place to start their work, because of the large African community who was living there. Actually, their evangelization project was primarily directed to marginalized families of African origin, and secondarily to the local community as a whole. Yet, as I will illustrate in the following pages, the main public of the church became the migrant community, regardless of the country of origins.

In a short time the community grew conspicuously, and in 2004 the general assembly set up an autonomous organization. In 2008, however, the group joined again the Church of God. Pastor Eliseu describes this shift as an instrumental strategy, as affiliation in a recognized denomination allowed them to obtain a legal status[20]. Furthermore, membership in the Church of God also enabled Pastor Eliseu to gain access to a large international network, including congregations settled in more than one hundred and seventy countries. However, his current set of connections extends beyond denomination borders, including transnational ties with pastors, preachers and missionaries from all over the world. Especially, he has built up over time a network of congregations between Bissau and Lisbon, inviting Guinean pastors to preach in Vale do Forno. At the same time, Eliseu's network includes other African churches in the diaspora, especially those associated with Guinean migratory movements. For instance, in the last years Eliseu has travelled in France and Belgium, visiting Evangelical churches frequented by Guinean migrants in order to collect donations to MEL's mission in Bissau[21].

Despite its affiliation to the Church of God, MEL's theological identity seems quite fluid. As shown by its separation from the mother church between 2004 and 2008, its relationship with the IDP appears more instrumental than substantial, constituting an unstable

[20] The structure of the Portuguese Religious Freedom Law, based on separate agreements with established religious institutions or religious federations of smaller communities, explains the tendency of newly-founded churches to join larger organizations. In this case, the affiliation to the Igreja de Deus em Portugal enabled MEL to become part of the Associãçao Evangélica Portuguesa, giving them access to the privileges entailed by legal recognition, including tax exemption and legal validity of religious marriages (see above).

[21] The transnational circulation of ministers has already been noted by scholars who have studied Evangelical Christianity in Africa and in the diaspora. This is also the case of Pastor Quintino, who since many years has been engaged in visiting the religious communities of Guinean Evangelical migrants all over Europe (see chapter 2).

balance between autonomy and allegiance. Every time I asked Eliseu whether his congregation was Pentecostal or Charismatic, he answered that it was not "radical". Indeed, although many believers practice glossolalia – the most visible sign of Pentecostalism - I never heard Eliseu speaking in tongues. His own preaching style is not as emotionally charged as that of many Pentecostal preachers. He describes himself as "calmer" and "more liberal" than other ministers from the IDP. As previously observed, the same flexibility is expressed in MEL's relationship with other Evangelical movements, cutting through denominational borders. Likewise, in terms of moral code MEL's leadership seem to be relatively tolerant, abstaining from exerting any dress restrictions, and allowing a high degree of musical creativity. Nonetheless, sex before marriage is officially banned, as well as the consumption of drugs and tobacco and the abuse of alcohol, and, of course, the involvement in animistic practices (however, I never heard about disciplinary measures in cases of noncompliance).

The "liberal" style of MEL may be ascribed to its young membership, and its missionary thrust towards young people living in the suburbs and exposed to "deviant" subcultures, as I will show. Significantly, a Guinean pastor belonging to another denomination once defined MEL is an "*igreja de miúdos*" (a church of kids), a phrase which implied a pejorative undertone and alluded to its supposed spiritual immaturity and moral laxity. From the point of view of MEL's leadership, however, the mission towards the youth of the suburbs is a spiritual vocation, and a certain degree of moral flexibility is seen as a means to gain souls for Jesus.

Within MEL's mission strategy, a crucial role is played by music. As Eliseu explained to me, in Guinea-Bissau Evangelical churches have had traditionally quite rigid moral codes. Their prescriptions involved not only the conduct of the believers, but also defined standards of clothing and musical performance in worships. Their idea was that members had to avoid "worldly" aesthetics, including dress and music styles regarded as inappropriate. By contrast, MEL's approach would be more open towards those outward appearances that do not affect the salvation of the soul. According to Eliseu, this method would be more effective, especially in evangelical work with younger generations:

> The church there [in Guinea-Bissau] is really backward. The church has people of worth, and it is not able to enjoy their value. Why? Because there is a power that is dominating, which does not let young people grow. It is the power of those who are at the top, the elders [...]. Because they come with those principles: the church is so and so, young people cannot do this because they are rebellious [...]. I saw young people groups who have talent indeed, who know how to sing and play so strongly, people to whom the church should give more value, more growth, more importance... No, the church, when it sees that young people are doing that, it expels them, [because of] discipline and everything. [...] There are young [Christians] who play at concerts, and the church considers that a sin. [In their opinion] a believer cannot play music that is not church music. And you cannot do many other things, because it is a sin. Young people are in the world, and are imitating other young people through clothing, appearance. A young of the church cannot do that, if he does it he is already in the worldly life. The church is no longer concerned with anything else, it just attacks. By contrast, the church should show the principles in which young people have to conduct their lives. God did not say: "My son, give me your ears; my son, give me your eyes". No, God said: "My son, give me your heart!" [...] If you stay over the youth, they just escape. [...] But if we teach how they should proceed in the life which they chose, it will be good].

To tell the truth, changes are occurring on the Guinean Evangelical musical scene as well. Christian bands and singers are emerging, feeding a niche musical market which includes live concerts and small productions, with CD's and DVD's circulating through transnational Evangelical networks. These innovations, as well as Eliseu's reflections, must be placed against the background of "Christian contemporary music" (Blanes 2008), a global musical market which encompasses a plurality of musical styles and practices, whose common denominator is Gospel and praise-to-God subject. As observed by Ruy Blanes, Christian contemporary music "places itself at the centre of what is often named 'spiritual battle': on the one hand, the 'world', where people who were not saved are living, is accused, […] to be the land of Satan; on the other hand, this world can be also interpreted as a 'land of mission',

with many souls to save, and the music can be a key weapon for evangelization" (Blanes 2008: 216).

Indeed, Pastor Eliseu is very committed to young people of Guinean origins. His goal is not only the salvation of their souls, but also their existential and material wellbeing. Actually, as many MEL's leaders observed, adolescence may be a quite critical stage of life, wherein multiple kinds of uneasiness and unrest may drive young people to leave the straight path. This risk would be especially strong in the diaspora, where adult references are often lacking, due to absence or overwork of parents and tutors, as it often happens in transnational families. As a result, many youth would associate with "deviant" groups, turning to petty crimes and "perverted" behaviour (which, in the view of MEL's leaders, would include use of alcohol and drugs, violence, and sex before marriage). Eliseu personal engagement with the so-called "second generation", that is, the children of Guinean migrants, takes multiple forms. Firstly, as he often emphasizes, he tries to "give value to their talents", and this endorsement goes mainly through music. Secondly, he is strongly concerned in seeking solutions to the problems resulting from their migrant condition, trying to address their needs in terms of legal documents, residence, and scholarships. Finally, he proposes himself as a mediator in familiar conflicts, lodging boys and girls in his house in the most difficult cases. In other words, he proposes himself as a "surrogate family head" (Van Dijk 1997: 148-149), giving a day-to-day assistance in all sorts of issues, and exerting a deep penetration into the private lives of its young congregants. Acting as a family head, he receives young people into the "new Pentecostal family" (ibid.), offering new bonds to teen-agers who are often affected by a weakening of family ties, and who occupy a foreign position in a host society (although many of them were born in Portugal). The congregation has a predominant Guinean membership, but other Portuguese speaking African countries are also represented (Sao Tomé e Principe, Cape Verde and Angola, but not Mozambique), as well as Brazil. Many youths were born in Portugal from migrant parents. The majority of Guinean members (including the pastor) belong to the Papel ethnic group. The second largest group is Balanta, followed by Bijagó and Manjaco.

In 2012, Pastor Eliseu married Elza, a quite active Brazilian member of the church. At that time he was a widower, as his wife had died of disease some years before. The marriage between Eliseu and Elza enhanced the Brazilian participation in the church, as many relatives

of the bride joined the congregation through time. Actually, some neighbours started to identify MEL as a "Guinean-Brazilian church". The inter-racial and inter-national marriage is a recurrent pattern in the congregation, consistently with the insistence of the leadership in overcoming particular identities and emphasising the belonging to the universal community in Christ. At a micro-level, it appears as a strategy to set up alliances between the different groups of the church. Indeed, this practice seems to reproduce in the diaspora a long-standing social pattern which evolved over the course of Guinean history, consisting in establishing connections between foreign and local groups through kinship ties (see chapter 2).

Though many believers live in Vale do Forno and in the Odivelas district, other members are settled in more distant suburbs. Two dynamics of participation are therefore in action: one is upon a territorial basis; the other is based on personal social networks. In the case of many Guinean worshippers, the bond with MEL starts before migration. Actually, many Guinean members come from the Missão Evangélica de Belem, the same congregation to which Pastor Eliseu formerly belonged. Furthermore, many congregants are relatives of the church founders. Generally, missionary work runs through kinship ties: many visitors and new converts are relatives of the members of the congregation.

According to Eliseu, today MEL has one hundred and fifty members, among which around thirty are youths. However, the number of churchgoers steadily changes owing to the mobility of the members. Due to the economic crisis in Portugal, many believers go abroad looking for a job. The most common destinations are France, England, Spain, and recently Germany. Many youth move for study, chiefly to England, the USA and other regions of Portugal. Several families have split: men work far away and go back home only for brief periods of time, women remain at home with children. However, women are also travelling to other countries, mainly as domestic workers. In this case, they generally leave their children to a female relative. Due to the mobility of adults, often children and teen-agers live with relatives other than their parents, a situation that may occasionally result in domestic conflicts. In Eliseu's opinion, the lower attendance of male members to church activities would be due to their job mobility. Whatever the reason, women seem to participate in a more active and regular way in services and other church activities. During the months I attended the church, the number of presences at the Sunday functions varied between sixty and eighty adults, reaching more than one hundred people in special occasions.

The social composition of the congregation is quite mixed. The majority of young people are students, attending school or university. Most adult members have poorly paid and low-skilled jobs, in the sectors of constructions and industry for men, cleaning and domestic services for women. In the last period, many people became unemployed or have worked intermittently. However, especially among the leaders, some people have qualified jobs, such as educator, nurse, pharmacist, architect, etc. There is also a small group of elderly women, mostly housewives, and a minority of people with residence permit for health reasons, who are not allowed to work by law. These last two groups are normally living with relatives, contributing to the domestic economy with undeclared and occasional jobs. In spite of generally low wages, most people have a good level of education, except some of the elderly women. In summary, the congregation is formed by a minority of middle-class legal migrants, mostly employed in the service sector, a large group of young students, and a majority of low-class migrants, with unskilled or precarious jobs, some of them without residence permit.

MEL's organization reproduces the classic Evangelical pattern. The highest hierarchical levels are occupied by the pastor, the general secretary and the *direcção* (the council or presbytery, currently formed by five senior members). At the moment, Pastor Eliseu is assisted by two co-pastors, who substitute for him in his absence. One is Pastor Carlos, an elderly Portuguese minister of the Igreja de Deus[22]. The other is Saline, one of MEL's founders, member of the *direcção*, and recently consecrated pastor by the supervisor of the IDP. Born in Sao Tomé e Principe, with a higher level of education than Eliseu but without complete theological training, Saline is basically Eliseu's right-hand man.

The General Assembly consists of all the baptized members, while the intermediate level is formed by the *departamentos*, groups dedicated to specific activities and guided by a leader. There are seven of them: *departamento dos homens* (men group), *departamento das senhoras* (women group), *departamento dos jovens* (young people group), *departamento das crianças* (children group), *departamento das missões* (mission group), *departamento da área social* (social area group) and *grupo de louvor* (musical group).

[22] Carlos' wife, their young nephew and an old lady who was a member of his early congregation constitute the small group of MEL's believers of Portuguese origins. I suspect that Carlos was assigned to MEL by IDP's hierarchies, in order to better control Eliseu's aspirations for autonomy. Nonetheless, Carlos is treated with great respect by the whole congregation (even if his sermons seem to elicit less enthusiasm and less consideration of those of the other ministers).

In the case of MEL, the distinction between *crentes* (simple believers) and *obreiros* (members who participate actively in the organization) is rather fluid: those who play any administrative or spiritual role of responsibility in the *direcção* or in the *departamentos* are defined as *líders* (leaders), without any specific formal recognition. Nonetheless, the *direcção* is going through a process of formalization, leading to the consecration of all its members by the supervisor of the Igreja de Deus.

Children, as well as visitors, are formally considered outsiders. Following the Evangelical tradition, the MEL practices adult baptism. In the case of individuals belonging to Evangelical families, the experience of conversion usually occurs in childhood. In these instances baptism takes place during adolescence, after the boy or girl has received Bible training. Actually, it is believed that baptism should be a personal, conscious and adult choice, supported by a rigorous study of the Bible. Baptism in water of the new converts takes place once a year in summer time, when the community goes to the estuary of a river in the Serra da Arrabida, south of Lisbon, in an extremely suggestive natural environment.

In the case of Evangelical believers who come from another congregation or, as it often happens, from another country, in order to join MEL they have to present a letter of recommendation from their previous church[23].

The Missão Evangélica Lusófona: Ritual Dimension

As attested by the church name, the language of worship service is Portuguese. Nevertheless, Kriol of Guinea-Bissau is also spoken in several occasions, such as choirs, praises and informal conversations. Besides, as individual prayer is a kind of inner and personal communication with God, other maternal languages are also used, such as Kriol from Cape Verde, São Tomé e Principe and Angola, as well as ethnic idioms.

In prayer, coherent with Pentecostal doctrine and practice, speaking in tongues is performed, but not by everyone. As remarked by Pastor Eliseu, the believers who converted in Portugal are keener to practice speaking in tongues, and more influenced by Pentecostal models of devotion. By contrast, believers who spiritually grew in Guinea-Bissau show a

[23] This is a quite common practice in Evangelical circles, aimed at enhancing the circulation of believers through different congregation and denominations, allowing a certain degree of control of members' movements by local directions. Despite not being a formal MEL's member, I also received such letter of recommendation when I went to Bissau (although I never had to use it, as oral identification was always sufficient).

calmer disposition, being less likely to give vent to their emotions in prayer. Actually, as I noticed in chapter 2, despite the recent influence of Pentecostal religious experience, the Evangelical movement in Guinea-Bissau has been historically shaped by more classical Protestant styles, due to the Methodist and Baptist background of most missionaries who contributed to its growth. At the same time, due to the interdenominational character of the early Evangelical missions, within the Evangelical Guinean minority denominational boundaries are more fluid than elsewhere. Thus, within MEL a plurality of modes of devotion is coexisting.

Although many believers do not practice glossolalia, speaking in tongues is actively transmitted in MEL. A sort of spiritual training is specifically given during the *culto de libertação* worship. The path to baptism implies a sort of initiation process, including a course in biblical studies, and the regular participation in weekly liberation services. When I was frequenting MEL, Eliseu proposed to me to follow this doctrinal and ritual training, as if I was an aspiring novice. I accepted enthusiastically. Although Eliseu was aware of my research aims, probably not all those who attended the sessions were acquainted with my anomalous position. At that time, the *culto de libertação* was led by Pastor Carlos, a Portuguese elder minister who served for many years in the IDP. Indeed, he is much more inspired by Pentecostal models that Eliseu or Saline. During the worship, he was especially concerned in transmitting specific bodily dispositions to the neophytes. I also became a subject of his attentions. In particular, I remember one time when he pushed my head down to make me kneel and kept me there for some minutes, while praying for me and exhorting me repeatedly: "Speak daughter, speak!" To his chagrin, his efforts did not have satisfactory results with me. By contrast, my colleagues experienced a seemingly radical transformation. They were all women, most of them of Catholic background. I could observe their change – or at least its exterior manifestation - over the course of the time preceding the baptism. At first, their mode of prayer followed a Catholic pattern, very quiet, silent, and curled up, with folded hands and inward expression. After some month, they prayed loudly with open hands, they cried, and frequently spoke in tongues. Apparently, the "techniques of the self" performed by Pastor Carlos, focused on the transformative action of language, had succeeded in inscribing Pentecostal practices and meanings on their bodies, transmitting a specific "embodied

religious experience", as in the case of Charismatic believers studied by Thomas Csordas (1997; 2002; 1994).

Glossolalia is only the more evident manifestation of the centrality of the language dimension in Pentecostal-Evangelical religion. As pointed out by Ruth Marshall, the Pentecostal universe is one where "words have agency", and spiritual speaking is conceived as a form of "action on the world" (Marshall 2009:4). In this view, prayer is understood as a way to make things happen through the channelling of the power of Holy Spirit, as in the case of the healing of the sick through the laying on of hands. Although there are no specific therapeutic sessions, healing through prayer and "at a distance" intercession for sick members are common practices, both during Sunday and weekly services. Likewise, single believers may ask for a collective protecting prayer at the time of critical events, such as travels, hospitalizations or domestic problems. In all these cases, collective prayer is held as more powerful than individual one, and more likely to produce effective results[24].

Finally, the use of recurrent words and formulas related to Evangelical world (such as '*alleluia*', '*amen*', '*irmão*', '*baptismo do Epirito Santo*', '*falar em linguas*', '*testemunho*', '*a paz do Senhor*', etc..) creates a sort of specific spiritual language that unites the members of the congregation by relating them to the universal Christian community. Therefore, besides the importance of language in Pentecostal doctrine and practice, in the case of MEL verbal communication plays a central role in the construction of a collective identity within the religious community. This Evangelical and Lusophone identity, however, does not clear more specific identities represented by the plurality of idioms spoken in church. Rather, Portuguese language constitutes a common ground, in a community marked by a high degree of linguistic pluralism.

The place of worship is a former warehouse, located at the ground floor of a three-store building. The interior space does not have windows and is illuminated by neon lights. It includes a room of around 60m², a small office and a toilet, with direct access from the hall. The owner is a private person, to whom the church pays a monthly rent. The frontage, without any sign, overlooks a side street, and has a large frosted glass door with aluminium frame. Apart from the hours of worship it is not easily recognizable from the outside, if not for the

[24] As once a Guinean minister told to me, prayer is a crucial element of difference between Evangelical and Catholic tradition. Evangelical *oração* (oration) would differ from Catholic *reza* (prayer) to the extent that the latter would be a mere repetition of a standard formula, whereas the former would be a free, inner and personal message to God (interview, January 2013).

posters promoting events organized by the congregation, hung on the front door. However, neighbours know that it is an Evangelical church because of religious choirs, clearly audible from outside almost every day. Near the entrance, on the right, is placed a counter, with soft drinks, a computer connected to a projector and a small sound mixer. During the functions, a young man from behind the counter stays at the mixing board and projects images and Bible passages on a small screen, positioned on the left side of the stage. At the end of the hall there is the stage, framed by a drape of blue curtains. On stage there is the pulpit, a drum kit, a keyboard, loudspeakers and microphones. In the hall there are a hundred blue and white plastic stacking chairs. During services, when the pastor is not at the pulpit, he is sitting on the side of the stage, with the back leaning against the left wall of the room. At the opposite side, in front of him, the seats are reserved for the choir. The other chairs are placed in rows and occupy all the available space, only leaving a central narrow corridor. Usually, in the front rows stay the guests and the most influential leaders, seated on blue chairs. Young people, families with children and latecomers usually sit in the back rows, on white chairs. The places are not fixed, but I noticed that many believers have an area of preference. During the service one of the senior members is responsible for welcoming the people, showing them to the vacancies. In general, the decor is quite simple and minimalist but clean, following the Protestant style. Walls are almost bare, decorated only by photocopies of Bible verses and by a billboard with the annual calendar of the church. Consistent with the Evangelical doctrine there are no sacred images, apart from a picture with the denomination's symbol, a cross with a tongue of fire, in a niche on the wall behind the stage.

Eliseu wishes to find a larger space in the future, because the congregation is growing and often those who arrive late during the services can not find seats. He also would like other rooms to be used for the various activities of the church, for example to entertain children during services[25]. His most ambitious project is to build a place of worship in *Vale do Forno*. However, for the moment the finances of the church do not allow support for a more expensive home.

Inside the place of worship, activities take place every day except Monday, which is the day of rest. On Tuesday evening, it is held the *culto de oração* (prayer group), on

[25] Other Evangelical congregations organize every Sunday, during the function, the "children service". The goal is to give the members' children a Christian education, using biblical stories and fun activities. In the case of MEL, as a separate room is not affordable, children participate in the adults' worship together with their parents.

Wednesday afternoon the *culto de bencão* (blessing cult), on Thursday afternoon the *culto de libertação* (deliverance meeting), Friday evening is dedicated to the *estudo da Palavra* (Bible study), Saturday is devoted to band practice, to activities of the *departamento de acção social*, as well as to other more sporadic actions such as meetings of the women's group, workshops on specific topics or the *café convivio* - a moment of conviviality open to neighbours and visitors. As Ruy Blanes points out on the Igreja Filadélfia the complex of activities, from the most ritualized to those without a specific religious content (excursions, sport activities, social dinners, parties) denotes the intensity of involvement of single believers within religious community, so that in this context the places of worship become "places of life" (Blanes, 2008: 108).

The most important function is on Sunday. Normally, worship takes place between 10 and 12.30 am, but in the case of days dedicated to special events; it can last up to 1 or 2 pm (which happens very often). The new comer greets the others with an "*a paz do Senhor*", to which is responded "*a paz*" or simply "*amen*". Who does not give the answer of rite is immediately identified as an outsider. Then he/she goes to look for a chair and begins to pray, alone or in small groups. Leaders roam the chairs, placing their hands on individual believers and praying for them. Everyone has with him his personal Bible, and possibly a notebook. People are generally well-dressed, men in suits or in trousers and shirt, women in traditional African dressing or modern clothing. Young people have trendy clothing that does not distinguish them from their Catholic or non-believer peers. Young women and girls can be quite sexy, apparently without risking any reproachful look.

When the church is full enough, the band begins the *tempo de louvor* (time of praise), which lasts about 45 minutes. The whole community participate enthusiastically by singing, dancing and clapping. The music ranges from classic American Evangelical hymns translated into Portuguese (often via Brazil), to choirs in Kriol from Guinea-Bissau. In any case, the arrangement offers a driving rhythm and a pattern of call and response, in an African style. The instruments are drums, keyboard and Djambé. After the *louvores*, the secretary goes to the pulpit and announces the appointments of the week. He is followed by the minister of the church, who starts by greeting the visitors and inviting them to introduce themselves, while the entire community intones "*benvindos, em nome do Senhor*" (welcome, in the name of the Lord). Afterward, the pastor opens the stage for prayer. Again, the scene in which function

was started takes place: people pray alone, in pairs or in small groups. Many languages are spoken, but Portuguese seems prevalent. Often people have strong gestures and intense expressions. Some people stamp their feet as if to crush something, others beat the fist into the palm of their hand. Many, both men and women, cry. Some speak in tongues, especially when they lay their hands or pray for someone else. The overlapping of voices creates an emotional unity that reaches a climax and then becomes almost a whisper: at that point, the pastor goes back to the pulpit and takes the floor.

More than a protagonist actor, Pastor Eliseu is a moderator. Only a few times I heard him preaching, more often he leads believers who want to give witness, and then calls to the pulpit the *pregador* (preacher), often a church leader or a special guest. The phase of testimonies is very heterogeneous: single believers can share with the audience a thought, a poem, a Bible reading, a singing, an exhortation, an edifying story, or the narration of an event in which God revealed in their lives in a miraculous way. The community interacts with exclamations like "*amen*" or "*alleluia*".

Finally, the *pregador* begins the sermon. The band gets off stage and believers sit down, picking up their Bibles. Usually the message begins with a biblical reading: the preacher reads himself, or more often invite someone from the audience to read. As the reading goes on, biblical verses are projected on screen. The sermon is a speech, which integrates biblical passages, narratives of miraculous or uplifting events and exhortations to the audience. The rhetorical style changes from person to person, but usually it is quite expressive: the manifestation of emotions (anger, pain or joy) is seen as a sign of divine inspiration, as well as an open attitude to the circulation of emotions within the community. Like the previous steps, the *tempo da Palavra* (time of the Word) is also quite interactive: the public comments with exclamations, and often the speaker encourages the bystanders to intervene with questions and exhortations.

After the sermon, two chosen members, usually women, pass among the rows to collect offerings with baskets. Other times they stay next to the pulpit, and believers are invited to get up and submit their offerings there. At the same time, the band goes on stage and starts singing again. The function ends with offerings, but believers stick around to greet and converse in the church, or in the street next to the entrance.

As evidenced by this short description, music is a central aspect of MEL's life. Firstly, it plays a ritual function within the *tempo de louvor*, a special phase of the Sunday service, which occupies one third of the worship time schedule. Here, music and singing, performed by the *grupo de louvor* and accompanied by the congregants with choirs, clapping and dancing, is conceived as a "liturgical act" (Blanes 2008), enabling people to praise the Lord and establishing a direct communication between single believers, the congregation as a whole, and God. As in the case of the Igreja Filadélfia studied by Ruy Blanes, the song of praise enhances the contact with the Holy Spirit, being acknowledged as "a mechanism of physical and emotional predisposition to the act of adoration" (Blanes 2008:145). Secondly, even when it is not the protagonist, music accompanies every religious meeting and propitiates the presence of the Holy Spirit. As I have already observed, the band practices a fair degree of creativity and experimentation, combining African rhythms with electronic sounds and classic Evangelical melodies. The leader of the *grupo de louvor* is the lead singer, a middle-aged woman with a beautiful voice. The other members, including the choir and the musicians, are mostly young people.

What I just described is a standard structure of the Sunday services, but it is not a rigidly observed pattern: each time the various stages can be reversed or alternated with *louvores* and activities proposed by the pastor. Also, often Sunday worship is dedicated to celebrations or special guests. Every first Sunday of the month is celebrated the *Santa Ceia* (Eucharist). In theory, this is the moment when every member should contribute to church's finances by putting his or her tithe, closed in an envelope, in the offers' basket. In practice, the direction is rather easygoing on this point, as many people are unemployed or precarious. Thus, many believers put in the basket an envelop containing a note, saying they will pay the tithe as soon as they will get a stable job.

Midweek worship services are attended by approximately ten to fifteen people, mainly women. During Sunday worship, the pastor urged those who have the opportunity (e.g. because they are unemployed or are concerned exclusively with the family) to attend weekly functions. The scheme is modelled on the liturgy of Sunday worship. The function is directed by a leader, not necessarily the pastor, who is not always present and often plays a secondary role.

Out of the hours of worship, the pastor and the most active members, particularly those of the mission department, often carry out visits and prayer meetings in the homes of the believers who request it. As well, if needed, they visit people in hospitals and prisons. Their aim is to give members spiritual support in times of personal crisis, as in the case of diseases or disruptive events (such as loss of job, death of a relative, or legal problems). Sometimes, they go to the houses of needy neighbours, in order to bring food and clothes, together with the Word of God.

Beyond its ministry in Lisbon, the Missão Evangélica Lusófona founded a mission in the outskirts of Bissau, also affiliated to the Igreja de Deus em Portugal. The MEL rents a space and sends some money to the local community, and Pastor Eliseu goes quite often to meet the congregation. Every year, Eliseu embarks on a journey through Belgium and France, visiting various religious communities in search of funds for the mission in Guinea. At the same time Saline and Joel, leaders of the social action department, are committed to fundraising at various organizations, both governmental and non-governmental. The idea is to buy a portion of land in Bissau for the construction of a school and a youth centre. Despite the bad economic situation in Europe, Eliseu and the other leaders are optimistic and spend much of their time building the conditions for the realization of social projects in Portugal and in Guinea Bissau.

The Associação Comunidade Lusófona

Since its origins, the main MEL's mission was to give material and spiritual assistance to migrant families living in the area. The church had a special vocation to youth and children of migrants. This project has been carried out especially by the *departamento de acção social*, through leisure activities and material support directed at youth and needy families living in Vale do Forno and surroundings.

In 2005, MEL's social action department formed an association of social solidarity, the Associação Comunidade Lusófona (ACL), in agreement with the Odivelas municipal council. The idea was to promote a relationship with the local administration in order to access public funding. Actually, as the economies of the church are largely based on tithes and contributions from members, resources are too low to support social work. Although

public financial support has been quite limited so far, local government sustained the association by means of free transport for spiritual retreats and excursions, provision of spaces for special meetings, and food aid occasionally.

Formally, the association is an independent institution. It is formed of nearly one hundred members, but not all belong to MEL or are even Evangelical. However, the most active members are all in the *departamento de acção social*, and from the outset the president of ACL has been Saline, who is also the co-pastor and the leader of the social action group. Basically, the Association is the official face of the church in its relationship with local authorities.

Saline was born in Sao Tomé in 1977, and came to Portugal with his family as a child. He completed his studies in Lisbon, where he finally graduated in social psychology. Born in a Catholic family, he was a practicing Catholic until his conversion in 2002 within the Igreja de Deus em Portugal, where he met Pastor Eliseu. He worked for many years as a street educator for a local NGO, in a suburb of Lisbon. It is probably thanks to his job that he acquired skills and sensitivity in dealing with disadvantaged youth.

Saline's vocation towards young people is reflected in the aims and actions of the Associação Comunidade Lusófona. According to its statute, the general objective of ACL is to bring help to migrant families and their children living in the neighbourhood, whereas they are members of the church or not[26]. As seen before, this goal is consistent with MEL's missionary aims, especially those pursued by the social action ministry.

So far, the only regular activity has been a service of school support, which started in 2010 and is managed every Saturday by young volunteers attending the church. Though at the moment the intervention is principally addressed to the children of the worshippers, the objective is to extend it to the whole local community. Actually, the ACL recently obtained a public contribution in order to organize social and educational activities with young people of the neighbourhood. The direction is currently training a group of young believers to be

[26] As declared in the ACL statute, the aims of the association are: "to provide social support to migrants and needy families; to encourage the development of appropriate social skills in young people and children at risk to develop a deviant trajectory of life; to visit hospitals, prisons and homes; to further the right to citizenship and active participation in society; to promote meetings of conviviality and camaraderie among members, relatives and friends; to establish networks of cooperation with other institutions of a social nature". The activities envisaged to achieve these objectives are the following: "supporting services to families in need, namely with food, clothing and validation of nurseries and nurseries; promoting school support, educational activities and forums of youth debate; encouraging leisure activities, seeking the respect for life and human dignity".

employed in the project, in a peer-to-peer approach. Other actions are represented by excursions and summer stays addressed to the children and youth of the neighbourhood. In the future, the organization would like to enhance its activities, building up a day centre for youth and a nursery school, in order to respond to the lack of social facilities in the area.

As illustrated by Saline, youth and children living in the neighbourhood have to face a number of problems, as well as other young people living in the outskirts of the capital. Most of them have broken families and are living without parents or completely alone. According to Saline, the basic problem of young children of migrants is the difficulty of building their personal identity. Youths would be puzzled by the effort of coping with two different allegiances: on the one hand, the loyalty to the country of their parents; on the other hand, the fidelity to the nation where they are living. Although many of them were born in Portugal, due to legal restrictions and racial discrimination they hardly view themselves as fully Portuguese. Actually, Portuguese immigration laws have always included severe restrictions on the request of Portuguese nationality by children of foreign parents, even those who were born in Portugal. Thus, lack of family support and disorientation in the construction of personal identity would produce a set of negative effects on child development, ranging from learning problems and school dropout, to drug use and involvement in petty crime. According to Saline, many young people who presented "deviant" and "risky" behaviours, approaching the church would have changed their conduct and acquired a "Christian lifestyle".In the leaders' perspective, it is impossible to extricate social action from mission work. As affirmed by Eliseu, all ACL's activities are firmly based on biblical values: "Any evangelism that Jesus has done, he has used the social area. […] We are interest in making people come to church, but we have this love that Christ has shown on the cross. […] This is the most important work we are doing with people not Christian, showing this act of love for people who need help".

As observed by Ruy Blanes in the case of the Tokoist church, Christian communities may view their social activities as a form of evangelization through example, without necessarily implying a verbal transmission of the Gospel. By promoting social work toward needy people, believers expect their example to be attractive to others (Blanes 2011). In the case of ACL, explicit evangelization is practiced in a more pronounced form, together with more secular activities. For instance, on a stand prepared by the *departamento de jovens* of the church, during a concert organized by ACL evangelical brochures were lying beside

condoms. However, the activities of ACL and those of MEL's departments are barely distinct. For instance, in 2011 the ACL organized a Christmas party in the locales of the church, inviting all the children of the neighbourhood. In that occasion, many non-Evangelical children living in the surroundings came to the church, where a cartoon on the life of Jesus Christ was shown, and kids were invited to accept Jesus in front of the pulpit. Later, Christmas gifts were distributed to all the children (to tell the truth, many had arrived at the last moment, just in time to receive the gifts). What struck me that time, besides the evangelizing approach, which I personally considered quite aggressive, was the fact that all the children in church, both believers and non-believers, were black. Evidently, Portuguese neighbours did not want to set foot in the church, not even to receive a gift, so that my daughter - who came with me that time - was the only white child in the hall. Apparently, the racial divide had proved to be more effective than the religious divide.

Due to the overlap between religious and social aims, the relationship between ACL and the Odivelas local government has been ambivalent overtime. Significantly, the decision to form an association was done at the request of the municipality. The latter in fact, while acknowledging that MEL was carrying out social work in the neighbourhood, and showing a willingness to support it economically, had some difficulty in relating to an institution of a purely religious nature. The creation of ACL enabled the civil servants to justify the aid to the church. In turn, the church leadership proved to be able to meet the needs of its institutional partner, understanding the importance of a close relationship with the local administration, with the goal of gaining access to the economic and social resources that it could offer. At the same time, Eliseu is maintaining a constant dialogue with local institutions in his role of religious minister, in order to obtain a plot in Vale do Forno to build a larger place of worship[27]. Hence, MEL's strategy of interaction with local authorities unfolds on a dual-channel: on the one hand, as a grassroots religious community; on the other, as an association of social solidarity which acts on the territory.

In the exchange of views between MEL-ACL and local authorities, it is interesting to observe how mutual representations are constructed and maintained. On the one hand, building a role as a social agent interested in offering its help to the whole local population is

[27] Significantly, Eliseu established these political connections independently from the IDP hierarchies. This aspect shows how MEL's direction has been able to maintain a relevant degree of autonomy from its mother-church.

one of the main aspirations of ACL. On the other hand, in the Municipality's perspective of the association would embody the role of a cultural agent, able to enhance the cultural diversity in the area. In 2009, the Associação Comunidade Lusófona joined a group of partners involved in the Vertente Sul programme for urban regeneration, directed by the Odivelas council. On the official web-site of the programme, the duty of ACL is identified with "the promotion of multicultural dialogue and opportunity equality through the development of cultural activities related to personal and cultural enhancement of different communities"[28]. Within this plan, the association organized an intercultural event called "Cantam Odivelas", a concert to which several bands participated, whose members were mostly of African origins. In the website, Cantam Odivelas is described as an initiative aimed to "the promotion of a healthy multicultural interchange among the national and migrant cultures". By contrast, Pastor Eliseu interpreted it as a "work of evangelization", allowing the church to "go out to the street". During a function, he spoke about the event using the following words: "There will be many people, believers and non-believers, but we will be there as believers, with different behaviours". As he and Saline stressed many times, MEL's believers had to "make the difference" in the environment where they lived.

In spite of these contrasting views, the commitment of the church in maintaining a relationship with local institutions reflects its "need to engage with the 'post-secular' dimension of contemporary urban societies" (Garbin 2013:678). Apparently, a certain degree of misunderstanding is necessary so that dialogue can take place. Indeed, as argued by Franco La Cecla, far from preventing the encounter between cultures, misunderstanding may allow an interaction that preserve – and brings to light - the existence of multiple points of view (La Cecla 1997: 9).

Thus, the representations constructed from the outside, stressing the cultural peculiarities of the religious community in opposition to the native population, clashes with the universal aspirations of the church, wishing to perform its mission work toward the surrounding society. Similarly, as I will try to demonstrate in the next chapter, the same aspirations, expressed by the emphasis on the deliberately inclusive concept of "lusophony", are at odds with the social barriers which rose over time between migrant and native inhabitants of the Vale do Forno neighbourhood.

[28] http://pruvsco.cm-odivelas.pt/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3&Itemid=16

Chapter 5
Between Adventure and Nostalgia: the Migrant Condition and its Predicaments

Pour que la nation ait un dedans,
encore faut-il qu'elle ne se contente pas de renvoyer dehors
tous ceux qui n'appartiennent pas à ce dedans supposé de la nation;
encore faut-il que des vies surgissent à la frontière,
ni dedans ni dehors, à la fois dedans et dehors.
[Guillaume le Blanc]

In the fourth chapter I made a portrait of the Evangelical Guinean community in Lisbon, against the background of Greater Lisbon's religious landscape,. Then, I described MEL's history, organization and social setting. Finally, I depicted the social actions performed by MEL in the neighbourhood where it is settled. Whereas the previous chapter was centered on MEL as a religious organization, this chapter is focused on the issue of the migrant subjectivity. By taking as starting point the literature on contemporary diasporas and diasporic subjectivities, I will analyse the peculiar ways in which the condition of stranger is experienced by Guinean migrants in Lisbon. To this purpose, I will firstly describe the social and cultural features of the Guinean community in Portugal, as well as the historical circumstances of its emergence. Then, reflecting on what can be considered as the double dimension of the migrant condition, I will argue that the life of Guinean migrants in Lisbon is marked by a dialectic of adventure and nostalgia. Lastly, I will show how this dialectic acquires specific features in the case of Evangelical Guinean believers.

Migrant Bodies and Medical Scanners

Agostinho has been a good friend over the course of my research. He helped me so much in the first months of my fieldwork, teaching me basic Evangelical concepts and introducing me

to several churches and associations attended by Evangelical Guineans. He was born in a rural area of northern Guinea-Bissau in 1961, during the Portuguese occupation. When he was of school age he was taken into care by a Portuguese soldier who fostered him in the barracks of Biambi, where he completed primary school. Here he converted to Catholicism, despite his parents' objections. In 1973 he converted to Protestantism and was baptized for the second time, and has faithful to Evangelicalism until now. Despite his evangelical faith, at the age of twenty-five he married his wife in a traditional ceremony. The couple had seven children. In 1983, Agostinho was hired as a judicial officer in the Supreme Court. He worked there until 2002, when he began to feel sick, presenting symptoms such as weight loss, abdominal pain and extreme weakness. After a series of health examinations, he was diagnosed with a gastric ulcer. Consequently, he was given an abstention from work for health reasons, and he obtained a *junta médica*[1] (health visa) to receive appropriate medical treatment in Portugal. However, the bureaucratic process was blocked, because, as Agostinho learned from his colleagues, the officer in charge had sold his visa to someone else. Due to his connections and his constant complaints, Agostinho managed to make a second application, and finally came into possession of the desired document in 2005.

Although he had come to Portugal with a permit for medical reasons, Agostinho's plan was to remain in the country for some years to work, send remittances to his family and save money for the future. A job in Europe, even an unqualified position, would enable him to earn an income much higher than his public servant salary in Guinea-Bissau. Furthermore, with his earnings he could afford private schools for his children and fulfil his obligations to relatives.

So, in April 2005 Agostinho arrived in Lisbon with a health visa which allowed him to stay legally in Portugal to obtain the necessary treatment. Soon after his arrival, he was examined by a physician at the Santo António dos Capuchos hospital, who declared, during the first visit, that the lesion in his stomach was already healed. Nevertheless, she prescribed an endoscopy in order to verify her diagnosis. The results of the examination confirmed the hypothesis that the disease had already healed before. However, the diagnosis did not mitigate Agostinho's worries, and he continued to complain of persistent pain affecting not only his abdomen but also his chest and spine. In response to his protests the doctor subjected him to

[1] Thanks to an international agreement, a citizen of Guinea-Bissau has the right to request a residence permit in Portugal for health reasons, if his or her disease cannot receive appropriate treatment in their homeland. The procedure requires that the Guinean Ministry of Health contact the Portuguese equivalent, which in turn has to send the document, called *boletim de junta médica.*

an X-ray, which did not show any pathology. Although Agostinho continued to experience discomfort and pain, after five months the doctor signed a statement attesting to his successful recovery. Clearly, this "therapeutic success" entailed the patient's return to his country of origin. For Agostinho, returning to Guinea not only meant the unlikelihood of recovering from a persistent health problem, but also the failure of his migration plan. For these reasons, he never picked up his medical certificate and never returned to the hospital, relying instead on pharmacies or private doctors when the pain became more intense.

> My intention is not to stay here in Europe [for the rest of my life]. I came to Europe to look for what I believed to need, to get a little money to build a house, a house with better conditions. I am planning the future for my children. Because if I stayed there in Africa… Africans have many relatives, even if you have a good salary, that money is not enough. If you are working in the civil service, you have to take care of any relative who goes into your house; when they come home, you have to feed them. When they want to return to the village, then they will ask for money to pay transport costs, you see. If they smoke tobacco, you have to buy tobacco for them, too. Those who drink alcohol, you have to give them the money to buy liquor on the way to the village. It is mandatory, it's the African way.
>
> [...] I don't want to go back home without documents. Because if I go back without documents, and I still have health problems, they may get worse, then how will I get back to Portugal? It is a bit difficult, because they will not let me come back to this treatment. That is why it is worthwhile for me to look for residency first, and then I can go back to Guinea. But before to go back I have to plan my life, because now I'm thinking of staying here at least until I can make a good life there. Because [with the money I earn here] I can buy any land there, I can build a house. But if I stay there in Guinea, the money I earn is not enough to leave something for my children. That's why I came. It is worth me staying here if I can get documents to work.

The document signed by the doctor condemned Agostinho to illegal residence in Portugal, since the absence of a clinically proven disease invalidated the conditions for his presence in Portugal. Nonetheless, he found an unofficial job in the construction industry, and in 2009 managed to get a residence permit for employment purposes. At the time of writing (2014) he

had legal residence, and was waiting for the Portuguese nationality. After obtaining permanent residence, he wanted to return to Guinea and to resume his work in the Supreme Court, with the possibility of travelling legally to Lisbon if the symptoms worsened again.

Agostinho's story raises a number of questions relating to the condition of migrants and the representations of otherness in European countries. As noted by Didier Fassin (2001), to the extent that European law has become increasingly strict in granting residence permits to migrants, the right to health care remains the last frontier of legitimacy. Over recent decades, despite the rhetoric disseminated throughout Europe about the need for strict regulation of illegal immigration, and a sharp division between "regular" and "irregular" foreigners, the boundary between these two categories of migrants has become increasingly uncertain. Indeed, securing a residence permit has become more difficult for non-EU foreigners due to continuous changes in European and national legislation. While the number of residence permits for employment purposes and as a result of authorized political asylum have fallen drastically in recent years, permission for residence granted to people with diseases for which no treatment exists in their countries of origin has increased. As a result, in France, as much as in other European countries, "society condemns many undocumented foreigners to exist officially only as people who are ill. It is in this sense that we can speak of the embodiment of a social condition of migrant" (Fassin 2001:5). In terms of the relationship with civil servants and health personnel, in order to obtain legal status migrants are increasingly driven to build an image of themselves as suffering, so that "the undocumented foreigner perceives him/herself as a victim reduced to solicit compassion" (Fassin 2001:5) .

Fassin's reflections assist in the interpretation of Agostinho's situation and his conflicted relationship with Portuguese medical staff. On the one hand, the doctor's concern with verifying the existence of an "objective" disease, regardless of the patient's claims, reflects an attitude of distrust towards Agostinho. On the other,,the pressing complaints of the patient about his suffering revealed how, for him, the migration project was closely linked to the construction of a persuasive narrative of victimization (without detracting from the authenticity of his health problems) Hence, Agostinho's story shows the asymmetrical nature of the therapeutic relationship between European physicians and migrant patients, in which the final verdict on the legal status of the sick person is not dependendt on the statements of

suffering, but on the supposed objectivity of medical examinations. This latter point is well illustrated by Agostinho's words:

> I did not want to go back there [to the hospital] anymore. She was threatening to discharge me: as I was doing better, I could go back to Guinea-Bissau. I said: "No, I will not go back, because I'm still feeling pain, I am suffering. You cannot tell me to go back; do you know how the situation is in my country? If I go back, my pain will worsen, until I'll die. I won't go back, nor will I accept to be discharged. You can keep your discharge!" That's what I told her […]. I never returned there.

At the same time, Agostinho's experience raises another question: the capacity of the European health system to take in people coming from other countries and meet their care needs. In this case, the doctor proved unable to cure the suffering expressed by the patient. In spite of repeated visits to the hospital, the pain and discomfort did not disappear, and the anxiety associated with the disease and the possibility of it worsening did not decrease. In this sense, Agostinho's story hints at what many African migrants living in Lisbon call "African sickness" (Sarró 2007b), a notion used both in Africa and in the diaspora to identify diseases which are held to be immune to Western medicine, and for which it is necessary to resort to traditional medicine. Generally, these sicknesses are believed to be even a product of sorcery, carried out by envious people, or a punishment by spiritual entities for not having performed a ritual obligation. These ideas must be understood against the background of African indigenous aetiologies. In the case of Guinea-Bissau, as in much of Africa, the concept of sickness is embedded withing the wider notion of evil, being associated with misfortune and disorder on a personal, social and cosmological level (Augé and Herzlich 1983).

Although my friend was Evangelical, likewise many of my interlocutors he seemed to be constantly fluctuating between Christian and local cognitive logic. In addition, as I observed in chapter 2, generally Evangelical conversion does not imply a denial of local beliefs about supernatural powers, but rather their reinterpretation under the category of demonic action. As a matter of fact, when my tape recorder was off Agostinho assured me that, although there are sorcerers in Lisbon, their magic is not as strong as those in Guinea, because of their distance from the objects and places which are the source of their power. By

contrast, in his homeland, Agostinho's privileged status exposed him to the envy of relatives and friends, and to the risk of being a victim of sorcery. This was evident in the rituals practiced by his older relatives to protect him from the possible resentment of others.

> If my father or my uncle was in my home, I was obliged to buy everything he wanted […]. Firstly, I had to give him money, and then I had to buy wine or liquor, and tobacco. And when he was going back home, this is the great blessing that he used to give me, he would call other relatives and say: "Look, I was in his home, this is the wine he gave me". So he would take the wine and drink it. Firstly he had to put liquor in that glass […] which we call *kalamá*, then he used to say: "My son is working as a public servant, he has a good job, so we express our gratitude so as he can continue to have a good job, so he doesn't steal, he doesn't take anything from other people, and even if he takes things he will apologize, so there are never any problems", and so on. That is how they use to speak in that African style, with those idols that they have in their homes; this is the blessing that they used to ask for their son.

His Evangelical faith prompted my friend to describe these practices with a certain irony. Nonetheless, I do not believe it to be far from the truth that the fear of being a victim of sorcery was one of the main reasons for his European adventure. If I am not wrong, this could explain his fear that his illness would worsen if he returned to Guinea. This could also explain why he described his illness as an "inner pain", something that nobody can see - not even medical technology - and which can never be completely cured. Without any doubt Agostinho's sickness persisted, and reflected the failure of the Western therapeutic process.

This story illustrates the historical and social conditions that led many Guineans, especially those of the urban middle-class, to search a better life in Europe, where they end up living experiences of professional dislocation and social exclusion. At the same time, it is a minor example of how the representations of foreigners in Europe – as well as the politics associated with these – may affect the lives of migrants.

Over the past few decades, we can observe a growing paradox: while human movement is expanding and diversifying on a global scale, in the countries of arrival immigration policies are becoming stricter and more repressive. "Fortress Europe" is closing

its borders as well as defining strategies to control the flow of people. Migration laws have become increasingly defined by the European Union rather than by single states, and southern European countries have been urged to implement measures to "defend" the southern borders of Europe. In addition, international agreements have been signed with northern-African states bordering the Mediterranean Sea, in order to control departures from their shores. It is with reference to these events that many observers have described recent EU policies as a "remote control of migration" (Pian 2008:91). At the same time, while rules of entry into Fortress Europe are becoming stricter, migrants who are already present on European soil are maintained in a state of illegality and associated lack of rights, thereby constituting a reserve of cheap and exploitable labour, existing both inside and outside of nation-states.

The closure of frontiers and repressive politics within national territories are legitimized by a public rhetoric depicting migration as a threat to the welfare and safety of European populations. Through prejudice and negative connotations, political discourses and media campaigns are increasingly fuelling the fears of existing residents towards migrants. Migration policies and laws are justified by the necessity to separate "good" foreigners from "bad" foreigners, the "regular" from the "irregular". Moreover, far from remaining limited to national borders and the peripheries of large cities, policing devices are reproduced on the bodies of migrants. In hospitals for instance, as the case of Agostinho elucidates, medical "scanners" and other mechanisms of control can be understood as replicating techniques used at national frontiers to distinguish "who can be and who cannot be" (Bastos 2009:134). Hence, the territorial frontier evolves into an internal frontier, embodied by migrant patients, whose bodies are checked by medical equipment in search for signs and objective evidence of illegality. Yet, while their bodies are examined by scans, TAC and X-rays, their voices remain unheard.

The Migrant Condition

One of the hallmarks of the present global era is the intensification of human movement, promoted by dramatic changes in transnational economies, transportation methods and global media. According to Arjun Appadurai (1996), mass communication and migration are two diacritic elements of contemporary modernity. The increased circulation of images and people has dramatic effects, in both the private and public spheres. While modern subjectivity is

marked by increasing instability, due to a multiplication of connections between people, places and culture, at the same time the intensification of transnational migrations and global media has led to the emergence of "diasporic public spheres", undermining the sovereignty of nation-states. According to Appadurai, we are contributing to the emergence of a post-national world, in which states are less and less able to prevent their minority populations from becoming affiliated with transnational aggregations based on shared ethnicity or religion.

In recent literature on contemporary human movement, a key notion is one of "global diasporas" (Cohen 2008). Although it has ancient origins, the notion of diaspora is now taking on new meanings. As observed by Robin Cohen, the word is derived from the Greek verb *speiro* (to sow) and the preposition *dia* (over). For the ancient Greeks, diasporas were associated with migration and colonization. By contrast, for Jews, African slaves, Palestinian and Armenians, the expression signified a collective trauma, an outcome of persecution, resulting in the condition of peoples who "dreamed of home but lived in exile" (Cohen 2008:ix). Despite their variability over time and space, all diasporic communities settled outside of their actual or imagined native land, while remaining connected to it by bonds of loyalty and emotion. Accordingly, members of a diasporic community accept "an inescapable link with their past migration history and a sense of co-ethnicity with others of similar background" " (Cohen 2008:ix) .

In recent years, other groups have defined themselves as diasporas. Despite not being agents of colonization or victims of persecution (unlike their antecedents), contemporary diasporas maintain strong collective identities while living away from their motherland. In particular, in Cohen's view, the concept of diaspora may be a useful tool for describing the condition of many contemporary migrant groups. Indeed, as millions of refugees and exiles are being driven out of their countries by violent circumstances, a new pattern of migration is emerging. If early migrants were supposed to gradually identify with their adopted country in terms of political loyalty, culture and language, contemporary migrants increasingly maintain emotional and social ties with their homelands, thanks to technological advances in communication and transports. This new migrant condition is therefore produced by the transformations affecting contemporary global society, and specific aspects of globalization have created new opportunities for diasporas to emerge. These elements include: a world

economy with swifter and greater transactions enhanced by progress in communication and transport systems; forms of international migration marked by intermittent sojourning rather than permanent settlement; the development of a network of "global cities" as crucial sites of the world economy; the emergence of countertendencies to globalization, engendering a rising hostility amongst native populations towards foreigners in their midst; and a de-territorialization of social identity, challenging national allegiances in favour of multiple forms of identification. As a result, many migrants increasingly retain a "dual citizenship" (Cohen 2003: 194), creating transnational networks and seeking to influence social and foreign policy in their homeland as well as their host country.

Similarly to William Safran (1991), Cohen provides a narrow formulation of the concept, recognizing diasporas only as those expatriate populations which suffer specific conditions of dispersal, maintain a memory of a myth regarding their homeland, feel alienated in their host country, continue to claim their place of origin as their true home, nurture dreams of returning and build their collective identity on the basis of their relationship with their motherland. Taking the Jewish case as its paradigmatic example, this definition excludes many contemporary phenomena resulting from human mobility. In Cohen's view, for example, world religions (whose programmes are extra-territorial rather than territorial), borderland cultures (such as the seeping and inter-mingling of populations resulting from intense circulation of people in the borderland between Mexico and the USA), and stranded minorities (groups occupying small enclaves that arise from boundary changes in the wake of war or international treaties) do not count as diasporas.

In contrast, James Clifford (1997) has argued for a more inclusive understanding of the term, expanding it to encompass all communities who were dispersed from a common point of origin, regardless of the enduring connection with the original centre. In this view, "multicentre diasporas" such as the Middle-Age Jewish Mediterranean, or the "Black Atlantic" described by Paul Gilroy (1993), would be included within this larger definition, as well as those phenomena which constitute attachment to many different places, multiple residences and intense travel across nations. While this latter understanding opens up the concept of diaspora to the exploration of new forms of connectivity in an increasingly mobile world, according to some critics it runs the risk of the term losing its analytical usefulness (Klimt and Lubkemann 2002). Rather than formulating a set of criteria in order to establish

whether specific communities of expatriates are "real diasporas" or not, Klimt and Lubkemann (2002) proposed a discursive approach to the term. If former analyses identified diaspora as a category of social formation, the authors conceptualized it as a particular type of identity discourse, to wit, a particular way of imagining and presenting the self that "leads people to emphasize particular types of social connections and disconnections over others in their formulation of self" (Klimt and Lubkemann 2002:146). In order to distinguish these diasporic identity discourses from the specific historical and social conditions in which they are embedded, the authors introduced the term "diasporicities". In their view, diasporicities are those narratives, produced by dispersed communities, which involve a number of core propositions, including: an orientation to an original place; a sense of dual transnational attachment to both original and present place; a sense of commonality with others who have been dispersed from the place of origin to different destinations; a supremacy of the centre over multiple peripheries as the source of authentic culture and personal allegiance. In developing this perspective, the authors were inspired by their analysis of the Portuguese-speaking world, a global space encompassing a plurality of communities that share a significant historical link with Portugal, including contexts as varied as postcolonial states that Portugal once dominated, as well as post-independence "returnees" from Africa living in Portugal and Portuguese migrant communities in different corners of the world. Within this plural space, locally specific discourses of diasporicities emerge, even independently of a current link with Portugal, and sometimes marked by the reinvention of traditions. Besides its relevance for Portuguese-speaking communities throughout the world, this discursive approach brings into light the gap and the interplay between specific diasporic narratives on the one hand, and particular historical and social conditions of dispersal on the other.

Studies on global diasporas have therefore illustrated how contemporary migrant communities are increasingly marked by dual citizenships and multiple attachments, both to current and original homes. This double dimension has crucial consequences on a personal level, as many studies on migrant subjectivity have shown. Rather than emphasising the advantages of combining multiple nationalities, languages, cultures and identities, or the possibilities of belonging to transnational communities, Abdelmalek Sayad has described the condition of stranger as a "double absence", both in the place of origin and in the place of arrival (Sayad 2004). In his view, immigration and emigration are two different yet connected

phenomena, and studies on the subject should not forget that an immigrant is always an emigrant. For Sayad, the paradox of the emigrant is the effort – reflected by remittances and regular travels to home - to remain present in his/her homeland despite his/her absence. At the same time, the paradox of the immigrant is to be partially absent despite his/her material presence in the host country, insofar as his/her presence is reduced to the mere dimension of work-force labour. These contradictions affect migrants in their ability to adapt – both psychologically and physically - to new conditions. In some cases, illnesses and suffering are the outcome of this "impossible ubiquity" (Sayad 2004:125). As observed by Pierre Bourdieu in the preface of Sayad's book, the immigrant is *atopos*, permanently out of place. To the extent that he or she is neither a citizen nor a stranger, s/he dwells at the frontier of the social life (Bourdieu 2004).

Developing Sayad's reflections, Guillaume le Blanc recently described the "condition of stranger" (le Blanc 2010) as an ambivalent state, to the extent that migrants are permanently maintained on the frontier by the policies of the modern nation-state. According to le Blanc, "the stranger tends to exist only on the frontier. To live in this way, is to live separately from the common life. By living on the frontier, a stranger turns to be himself a frontier" (le Blanc 2010:18). If administrative rules are rendering the acquisition and maintenance of a residence permit for foreigners in Europe more difficult, the migrant condition is founded on a designation act: "the stranger is a name before to be someone" (le Blanc 2010:21). Besides its power to sanction administrative decisions, the language has the power to distinguish "good" national subjects from "bad" ones, fuelling a discourse of hate that turns strangers into enemies. In English, the different modes of being a stranger are defined by a range of terms, each referring to a particular way to be socially "outside"; while "foreign" is an administrative designation, "stranger" is the person who finds him or herself unfamiliar with the codes of the host country, in an unknown land. By contrast, "outsider" is the deviant stranger, and "alien" the stranger who is bearer of a threatening madness. Thus, the name of stranger is an "ontological agent" as much as a "sociological discriminator" (le Blanc 2010:102), insofar as it creates the existential condition of stranger.

Of course, acts of designation are the outcomes of a clear political strategy: to the extent that migrants are left in an extremely precarious situation, lacking in rights, they are available for exploitation. Indeed, in order to participate in national economic life, migrants

are allowed to cross some borders but not others; hence while the children of migrants may frequent public schools and their parents may have a job, they often remain undocumented. As a result, many individuals find themselves located in the interstices of social life, on the border between integration and exclusion, "between the inside and the outside" of the nation-state. In constant expectation of a document which could give them access to a full citizenship, strangers are "beings of pure waiting" (le Blanc 2010:36), and "prowlers" rather than "residents" (le Blanc 2010:43). Hence, in le Blanc's words,

> The inability to live his or her own strangeness as a positive strangeness, when one is defined and registered as stranger: this is the condition of stranger. The condition of stranger does not define a human condition, but points to a paradoxical conditioning: the construction of a separate subject, a human being who is split into an ostracizing public regime of designation and a private regime of experience that he or she cannot bring to surface (le Blanc 2010:32).

And yet, the stranger can outgrow this designation, and the condition can move beyond one of an insult, if counter-narratives emerge which are able to overcome the offensive label and contrast it effectively. According to le Blanc, this is the only way forward as the private experiences of "strangers" and the alternative voices of migrants emerge on the public scene, engendering a new politics which can generate a valuable critique of the host nation.
Although the reflections of Sayad and le Blanc refer to the French context, they can be extended to the entire European Union. Although migration policies vary between one European state and another, a general trend towards administrative tightening in one dimension and exclusion from full citizenship in another is taking place all across Europe. Moreover, an increasing role has been played by Southern European countries, which in the last decades have evolved into a central place in the geography of global migrations.

Guinean migration in Lisbon

The migration situation in contemporary Portugal must be situated within the Southern Mediterranean geopolitical context to be fully understood. As pointed out by Russell King (King, Lazaridis, and Tsardanidēs 2000, over the past forty years Southern Europe emerged as a major stage of immigration. Indeed, since the late 1970s Southern Europe has undergone a remarkable "migration turnaround" from emigration to immigration (King 2000:6). Whereas

in past centuries Southern European countries – especially Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece – were the source of abundant and constant flows of emigration towards the Americas, Australia and Northern Europe, throughout the 1980s Southern Europe became a destination of immigration for the first time, attracting migrants from Africa, Asia and, following 1989, East European countries. This rapid rise in immigration into Southern Europe may be ascribed to a series of factors, including the increasing difficulty to gain access to traditional countries of immigration such as France and Germany; the existence of long stretches of coastline relatively accessible to clandestine arrival by boat; the open nature of Southern European economies, heavily dependant on tourism, trade and shipping, and thus facilitating the entry of foreigners; the pre-existence of connections with the former colonies, especially in the case of Portugal; the dramatic modernization of Southern Europe since the 1970s; the specific nature of Southern Europe economic development, largely based on tertiary activities, tourism, fishing, agriculture and construction, wherein a key role is played by the informal economy. The highly seasonal nature of these activities areas has led to a demand for a flexible labour force within the informal labour market, which is where most migrants have been employed, due to their illegal status. Therefore, in spite of a persistent wealth gap between Northern and Southern Europe, Southern Europe gradually evolved from a "transit route" into a final destination for migrants from poorer countries (King 2000:8).

Similar to other Southern European countries such as Italy, Spain and Greece, until the 1960s Portugal was predominantly a country of emigration. The revolution of the 25th of April 1974 marked a change; with the independence of the former Portuguese African colonies, many citizens of Portuguese origin coming from these territories (the so-called *retornados*, returnees), returned to their homeland, while numerous African-born citizens with Portuguese nationality also began to arrive. Since the mid-1980s, the number of foreigners residing in Portugal has grown rapidly as a result of economic immigration. The economic crisis affecting many African countries in this period generated an increase in migration flows from the PALOPs[2], supplying the low-skilled sectors of the labour market. At the same time, the rise in migration to Portugal can also be ascribed to an increase in labour demand, due to the economic growth that took place in Portugal at the same time, largely as a consequence of

[2] Países Africanos de Língua Oficial Portuguesa (Portuguese speaking African countries).

the country's entry into the European Economic Community, which later became the European Union.

The 1990s were characterized by the exponential growth of the foreign population, with a consolidation of migration from African countries and a rising presence of citizens of Brazilian origin. The first decade of the new century was marked by the arrival of new migrants from Eastern Europe, particularly Ukraine and Romania. The foreign population largely accumulated in the coastal area of the country, particularly in the metropolitan area of Greater Lisbon. Despite this geographical concentration and the number of arrivals still being relatively low compared with other European countries, immigration has been an important phenomenon for Portuguese society, especially in the Lisbon Region.

Over recent decades, Portuguese migration policies included a series of legal measures which limited the entry of immigrants (in 1981, 1993, 1994, and 1997), and two campaigns of legalization for foreign citizens who were already present in the territory (in 1992 and 1996). In 2000, 2003 and 2007, in order to meet European directives, restrictive changes to the immigration law were approved, which hindered any kind of extraordinary regularization. According to these new provisions, the presence of foreigners became tightly linked to the labour requirements of the Portuguese economy, with work visas renewable annually up to a maximum of five years. Since then, the right to stay in the country has been strictly dependent on a work contract; hence migrants have been condemned to precarious dependency due to the fluctuations of the labour market.

According to the 2011 census, the foreign population grew by 70% in the last decade, reaching a number of 394,496 foreigners officially resident in Portugal, corresponding to 3.7% of the total population[3]. The largest national group was Brazil (28%), followed by Cape Verde (10%), Ukraine (9%), Angola (6.8%) and Romania (6.2%). With a proportion of 6%, Guinea-Bissau is the sixth largest foreign group in Portugal (and the fifth among non-European citizens), with 16,360 residents. These data do not include foreigners without residence permits and citizens with Guinean origins and Portuguese nationality. In 1998, Fernando Luís Machado (1998; 2002) estimated that there are 25-26,000 citizens of Guinea-Bissau residing in Portugal, including those without legal permits, most of themliving in the Lisbon region.

[3] In 1991 the percentage was 1.1%, and in 2001 2.2% (INE 2012).

Fernando Luís Machado proposed two different groups within the Guinean community living in Portugal: a minority made up of "Luso-Guineans" with Portuguese nationality, who arrived between independence and the mid-1980s, and a majority represented by migrants who arrived between the second half of the decade up to the current period, mainly for work purposes (Machado 1998). In addition to these two groups should be added a group of refugees whoarrived after the war which affected Guinea-Bissau between 1998 and 1999 (Bordonaro and Pussetti 2006).

The economic migration from Guinea-Bissau to Portugal that emerged in the 1990s, forming part of the broader framework of contemporary African exodus, has been influenced by various demographic, economic, social and political factors. Firstly, similarly to other African countries, over recent decades Guinea-Bissau has undergone a remarkable process of demographic growth. The censuses carried out in Guinea-Bissau since the early 1970s revealed a continuous increase in population, with a fertility rate of six children per woman, one of the highest in Africa. Population growth led to rapid urbanization: in 80 years the city of Bissau doubled in size from 100,000 to 200,000 residents, rising from 13% to 20% of the total population of the country (Machado 1998). Secondly, Guinean population movements have been prompted by economic crisis, a structural factor in the country since the years immediately following independence. Furthermore, the adoption of a Structural Adjustment Plan in 1987 – following an agreement between the Government of Guinea-Bissau, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund – resulted in a worsening of the economic situation. Economic liberalization measures resulted in a steep increase in inflation and foreign debt, and a general growth in poverty. Public servants were the group most affected by the crisis, as they experienced cuts of salaries and loss of wages owing to the financial crisis of the state. The adoption in 1997 of the CFA franc – the currency used in neighbouring West African countries - caused a further increase in the cost of living. Then, it was mostly the urban and educated middle class- rather than the working class employed in agriculture or the informal economy - hich bore the effects of the crisis, and rapidly headed towards impoverishment. In addition, within the middle class, better education was not accompanied by a correspondence in employment opportunities, disappointing the career expectations of young people who had pursued and completed their studies. Hence, it is mostly within this urban, educated population, whose expectations of social advancement or at least preservation

of their socio-economic status have been regularly frustrated, that the aspiration of migration is conceived. In addition, the framework outlined by Machado must be placed against the background of a long-standing history of human movements across the subregion (Brooks 2003; Brooks 1993; Knörr and Trajano Filho 2010). In this perspective, current Guinean migration may be seen as in line with long-term trends. In the last decades, principal destinations have been neighbouring African countries (namely Senegal and Cape Verde), Portugal (owing to pre-existent social networks with the ex-metropolis, linguistic affinity and legal facility) and France. However, due to the recent economic crisis in European southern countries, today Portugal is often seen by Guinean migrants as a port of entry to Northern Europe.

For the reasons outlined above, according to Machado Guinean migration to Portugal has a socially selective nature: the phenomenon of migration mainly involves the urban middle class, who on the one hand have the economic and social capital necessary to migrate, and on the other have been most disadvantaged by the progressive deterioration of their economic circumstances. However, once in Portugal, most of them experience an important professional break, finding occupations in civil construction in the case of men, and in catering and domestic service in the case of women (Machado 1998; Machado 2002). Moreover, the Guinean population in Portugal is predominantly composed of young males, in accordance with a migration model in which men arrive first and the family subsequently joins them. Finally, Guinean migration is characterized by a strong migratory chain, linking the capital of Guinea-Bissau to the region of Lisbon: "in this sense, migration Guinea-Portugal is largely a migration Bissau-Lisbon" (Machado 1998:26). As I illustrated in chapter 2, Bissau is a context in which long-standing historical processes generated an intercultural, interethnic, and interracial dynamic, resulting in what Wilson Trajano Filho (Trajano Filho 2008; Trajano Filho 2010) defined as a "creole society". Originating during colonial rule, as a result of engagement between the Portuguese colonizers and the indigenous population, this trend continued in the post-independence, with the intersections of different local groups, owing to urbanization.

This composite urban milieu, united by Kriol language, is transposed into the migration context. Machado's analysis is based on a survey conducted in 1995 amongst Guinean nationals residing in Portugal. While this work has not been updated, Machado's

results remain representative of an ongoing trend. According to these data, migration does not faithfully reproduce the wide cultural, religious and linguistic diversity that marks Guinea-Bissau, but differs from the context of origin both with regards to the regional composition of the population and the self-identification of individuals (Machado 2002). Firstly, hile back in Guinea Islam and local religions are the major affiliations and Christians form a minority, the majority of Guinean migrants living in Portugal were found to be Catholic, with a minority of Muslims and even smaller groups of other religious affiliations (Machado 2002: 249)[4]. Secondly, the preponderance of migrants from the Guinean capital resulted in predominance in the use of Kriol over local languages. By contrast, back in the homeland local languages are widespread in rural areas, notwithstanding the importance of Kriol as a lingua franca and its prevalence among young and urban people, as well as in public administration and the trade sector. In Guinea-Bissau Portuguese is spoken by a minority of the population, despite being the official language. In the diaspora, Portuguese is obviously the idiom used to interact with members of the host society, but in communication between relatives and fellow citizens Kriol and, to a lesser extent, local languages, were found to dominate (Machado 2002; Quintino 2004). Finally, the results of Machado survey show an ethnic composition that does not correspond to the situation in the country of origin. The main groups found to be represented amongst Guinean migrants were Papeis – the autochthonous group of the Bissau region, and thus most affected by the process of creolization - Manjaco, Mancanha and Fulas. The Balanta, who in Guinea-Bissau are the largest group, represented just 6% of the migrant population. Moreover, most of Machado's respondents claimed a mixed ethnic background, or did not affirm any ethnical belonging, preferring to auto-identify as "Guinean". Hence, in Machado's words, "what we find is the 'Creole society' transposed in the context of migration" (Machado 1998: 50); apparently, ethnic divisions were absorbed into the wider national dimension as part of the migration process (Bordonaro and Pussetti 2006).

[4] Based on a survey conducted in 1995, Machado's study is quite dated. The author compares the statistics from his sample (62% of Catholic, 18% of Muslims, 11% of non-believers and 6% of other religious affiliations) with the data from the 1979 census, according to which 35% of the Guinean population was Muslim, 60% practiced indigenous religions and 5% was Christian (Machado 2002). However, the 2009 census showed an enormous growth of Christianity (now at 22%), an increase in Islam (45%) and a decline in local religions (15%). Furthermore, while in the first years following Independence the Evangelical minority was statistically irrelevant, since the 1990s it experienced an important growth (see chapter 1). Despite the absence of recent data, a similar shift may have affected the Guinean community in Portugal, with a likely increase in the Evangelical population.

As observed by Clara Saraiva, the constant flow of people and goods from Bissau to Lisbon is an important reality, particularly visible in the central areas of Rossio, Mouraria and Praça da Figueira, where many Guinean migrants meet, circulate, and exchange goods and information, as well as in the movement of travellers and objects at Lisbon airport (Saraiva 2008). Examining the interweaving elements at the airports of Lisbon and Bissau, focusing on the movement of objects rather than people, Maria Abranches (2012) described the two airports as two poles of an intense circulation of goods between Portugal and Guinea-Bissau. Here, on days of flights to and from Bissau, people gather to receive goods *di tera* (from home) dispatched by their kin living in Bissau, and to send things back. Here, also, an informal small-scale and family-based transnational trade takes place to exchange goods to and from Bissau, via passengers' luggage. As observed by Abranches this complex system, in which gift and commodity exchange are sometimes difficult to distinguish, contribute to the maintenance of transnational links between the migrant community and their kin at home. While goods *di tera* from Bissau include all sorts of food, artefacts, cloths, medicines, and ritual objects, products which flow back comprise money, clothes, shoes, mobile phones and other electronic items. This short list evidences how circulation between Bissau and Lisbon is not limited to people and goods, but also embraces symbolic universes, including worldviews, religious beliefs and ritual practices (Bordonaro and Pussetti 2006; Saraiva 2008). While Guinean food arriving at Lisbon airport embodies key material and social values, offering protection to the migrant body and representing the longing for home amongst those who left, money and other gifts travelling from Lisbon to Bissau materialize the social mobility aspirations of those who remain. This transnational movement of objects acquires crucial relevance in a migratory context such as Guinea-Bissau, which is characterised by the limited mobility of people due to the high costs of travels and the scarcity of resources available to families. Within this framework, traders who never left Bissau are key actors, while migrants are engaged in maintaining transnational ties despite their marginal condition, "a desired but constrained international travel coexists with movement, dynamism and activity" (Abranches 2012:511).

Following Benedict Anderson (2006), Maria Celeste Rogado Quintino described the ensemble of Guinean migrants living in Portugal as an "imagined community", which "organizes itself, constructs it identity and produces a culture, reworking references and codes

coming from its country of origin, together with those appropriated from the host society, and drawing trans-spatial and trans-ethnic strategies" (Quintino 2004:26). This community is composed of considerable social, economic, ethnic and religious heterogeneity, the main divide being constituted by religious affiliation, especially between Christians and Muslims. At the same time, migrant Guineans living in Portugal share a common sense of belonging which is reflected in a set of social representations (which are constantly being renewed) and the creation of unitary strategies which form the basis of community life. Both Christians and Muslims religious practices overlap with animistic rituals and behaviour, both in ceremonial occasions and by recurring to traditional religious specialists (*djambacoss* in the case of Catholics and *mûro* for Muslims) to heal states of afflictions (Carvalho 2001; Quintino 2004; Saraiva 2008). Clara Carvalho (2001) and Clara Saraiva (2008) have described the key role of *djambacoss* practitioners who live in the diaspora in responding to the malaise of Guinean migrants, as well as in keeping a ritual interconnection between their place of origin and their place of residence. Using the Manjaco territory of Cacheu (Guinea-Bissau) as an observation point, Clara Carvalho detailed the pilgrimage of Guinean migrants to local shrines. Here, migrants regularly return to make donations as payment of the promises made to autochthonous spirits, as part of the contractual relationship established by travellers with the spirits of the land (see also chapter 2). In this sense the *djambacoss* (*napene* in Manjaco language) are especially apt to address the problems and maladjustments which arise in the migratory situation and manifest themselves in the migrants' bodies. Their therapeutic processes, which include the administration of *mesinhu* (medicinal plants) coming from Guinea-Bissau and the prescription of ritual travels to the homeland, make sense of individual suffering, framing it within a causal system that is significant for the patient (Carvalho 2001).

Moreover, the existence of a shared background is reflected in the reference to common origin in Guinean soil, as evident in the Kriol expression *parido na Guiné* (born in Guinea) or *bibi iagu di Pidjiguiti* (someone who drank water from the Bissau port). In this regard, Bissau acquires a central role as a symbol of a national identity cutting across differences. Further, despite their residential dispersal across different areas of the Portuguese capital - ranging from central areas to slums and social housing on the outskirts of the city - the majority of Guinean citizens are concentrated in the Lisbon region. Finally, this invented community has a significant associative movement, including formal and informal non-profit

organizations. These associations combine multiple functions: the acquisition of financial contributions from local institutions to be invested in community services; the organization of ritual practices and annual festivities, which are also moments of reunion and socialising; self-help economic support, often directed at members who need to go back home for ceremonial purposes, as in the case of funerary rituals. Guinean migrants thereby forge a "trans-identity" in permanent triangulation with wider society and their county of origin, the latter being always present as an emotional point of reference, expressed by the feeling of nostalgia and the desire to go back home one day (Quintino 2004).

Within this context, Evangelical Guineans occupy a minority position. While sharing with their fellow citizens a reference to a wider Guinean identity, they differentiate themselves from Catholics and Muslims, and participate in relatively distinct social networks. According to a common opinion, shared both by Evangelical and non-Evangelical Guineans, Protestant believers are much stricter in their rejection of animistic practices than their Catholic and Muslim compatriots. They rarely recur to traditional religious specialists, for example, and while they also created independent self-help associations on the *abota* model (see chapter 4) within Evangelical associations any activity related to animistic practices is banned. Nonetheless, similar to the situation in Guinea-Bissau, Catholicism and Protestantism may coexist within families in Portugal. This (literal) cohabitation is especially evident in the patterns of residence: due to a kinship-based model of residence and the shortage of low-cost housing, Evangelical and Catholic relatives often live in the same house. Therefore, kinship networks, loyalties and interactions and religious affiliations cross-over, especially in the case of Christians. Conversely, kinship bonds between Evangelicals and Muslims are less frequent.

In the light of the above analysis of the concept of diaspora, would it be correct to define the whole heterogeneous Bissau-Guinean community in Portugal as a diaspora, and more specifically the Evangelical Guinean community in Greater Lisbon? At a macro level, as illustrated by Quintino, despite their social, economic, ethnic and religious differences, Guinean migrants have created a kind of imagined community in Portugal, bound together by a common sense of attachment to the country of origin (generally referred as *tera*, land). This sense of belonging is nurtured by a set of common social practices, enduring links with relatives who remained at home, a constant circulation of goods between Lisbon and Bissau and widespread dreams of return. The portrait of Guinean migrants living in Portugal as a

kind of diasporic community may, therefore, be justified at this level. At a micro level, however, other kind of allegiances, predominantly based on religious affiliations, come to light. In particular, in the case of Evangelical Guineans, narratives of Christian universalism appear to prevail over discourses of diasporicity which are grounded on attachment to the motherland. Indeed, as Clifford (1997) and Cohen (2008) identified, Christian humanistic universalism is at odds with diasporic discourse, as the latter is territorial while the former is extra-territorial. On the one hand, Evangelical Guinean migrants participate in multiple daily social practices that connect them to their Catholic relatives and friends, both in Portugal and in Guinea-Bissau. These practices range from modes of consumption to patterns of residence, as well as the use of Kriol in everyday life. Although they generally abstain from recurring to ritual practitioners, undergoing traditional therapies and making ritual travels to local shrines in Guinea-Bissau, they nevertheless eat Guinean food, tend to speak Kriol language at home, maintain constant connections with their kin in their homeland, are involved in the trafficking of goods between Lisbon and Bissau and nurture dreams of return. In the case of Evangelical Guineans, the system of exchange between Lisbon and Bissau includes church networks as well as kinship connections. I have directly experienced the effectiveness of this trafficking during my trip from Lisbon to Bissau, when I entered into this transnational system of reciprocity. When I arrived at Lisbon airport, Eliseu was waiting for me with three suitcases full of clothes and small items of electric equipment for me to take to MEL's mission in Bissau. Likewise, on the day of my departure from Bissau, Eliseu's brother gave me three bags full of *comida di tera* (food from the homeland), for delivery to Eliseu. In addition, as I often happened to see, when one of MEL's believers travels to Guinea-Bissau, at the end of the Sunday worship after her return people gather around her to buy the products that she brought from home.

And yet, as I will illustrate in the following chapter, while the aspirations of my interlocutors to Christian universalism prompts them to represent themselves as missionaries in a land of non-believers, these representationst nevertheless clash with the failure of mission attempts towards Portuguese neighbours. It is this enduring link with the place of origin, on the one side, and the persistent feeling of alienation from the surrounding society, on the other, which led me to use the category of "diaspora" with respect to the Evangelical Guinean

community in Lisbon, although their case does not exactly fit within the stricter definitions of the term.

Between Adventure and Nostalgia

As highlighted by many scholars, duality is one of the hallmarks of migrant experience in our times. While Abdelmalek Sayad (2004) and Guillaume le Blanc (2010) portrayed the stranger condition as marked by a "double absence" or a life "between the inside and the outside", Ruy Blanes (2011) described the activities of Tokoist Angolan migrants in terms of "double presence". In his view, the dangers and deprivations described by Sayad are not the only outcomes of migration. Rather, "the migratory process also produces, apart from those tragic absences, particular senses of presence and belonging" (Blanes 2011:414). At least, this is the case of many Angolan migrants in Portugal, who circulate within Europe and from Europe to Africa for professional, personal and religious reasons. The transnational dimension of their life enables them to engage in multiple activities and create novel geographies and territorialities, including their place of origin and the host society. Hence, the migrants' double life not only entails a risk of being lost, but also a "space of potential" (Blanes 2011:414). According to the author, this is especially evident in the religious sphere, as in the case of the Tokoist diaspora in Lisbon. The Tokoist church is a prophet-based Christian movement which originated in Angola in the 1940s, and later spread across Africa and Europe through the circulation of its members. As Blanes observed, the rise of a "Tokoist diaspora" entailed a redefinition of missionary politics and mappings among the leadership of the church in Angola, as well as a new arrangement of the relationship between centre and periphery. For the church's leaders based in Luanda, for instance, Lisbon gradually became a strategic location, to the extent that Tokoist migrants were encouraged to become missionaries and proselytize to Portuguese society. No matter how numerically insignificant it might be from an Angolan perspective, the emergence of a Tokoist diaspora in Lisbon produced a new politics of belonging, less grounded on territory than on religion, aimed at "transcending ethnic and racial boundaries through processes of diasporization" (Blanes 2011:427).

Reflecting on the double dimension of the migrant condition, in this section I will argue, firstly, that the life of Guinean migrants in Lisbon is marked by a dialectics of

adventure and nostalgia; secondly, that these dialectics acquire specific peculiarities in the case of Evangelical Guinean believers. Beginning with the case of nostalgia: focusing on the case of migrants coming from the Bijagó islands, Lorenzo Bordonaro and Chiara Pussetti (2006) analysed the individual experience of Guinean migrants living in Lisbon as a form of "incomplete transnationalism". By describing the circulation of imagination, feelings and afflictions between Guinea-Bissau and Portugal, the authors observed how many Guinean migrants live a "double absence", betwixt and between, suspended between two places which do not belong to them. As they eloquently stated, for many Guineans "migrating is a luxury; keeping transnational networks is an even greater luxury" (Bordonaro and Pussetti 2006:147). Many young Guineans see emigration as the fastest way to escape the elders' authority and to leave what they perceive as isolated places. However, their desire to flee their place of origin is in most cases frustrated due to the high costs of migration, and many remain trapped in the urban spaces of Guinea-Bissau, captives between the village and Europe. And yet, for those who realize their dream of migration, life after arriving in Portugal is one of deep disillusion. In reality, in the host society they often experience economic precariousness and social exclusion, work in the most unqualified sectors, live in the most marginal neighbourhoods, and occupy the lower rungs of the social ladder. Thus, for most Guineans the experience of migration turns into a "great deception". The difficulties encountered in Portugal prompt them to reconsider their home society, recalling only its positive aspects, lead them to see migration as a transient phase necessary to remedy the flaws of their homeland, and result in their harbouring dreams of returning home. Accordingly, the motherland is recalled nostalgically as the place of identity, and is also evoked through consumption practices that privilege food products imported from Guinea-Bissau. As Pussetti and Bordonaro stated, "the poles of the discourse of migrants are now reversed: the road of dreams, the route of desires goes in the opposite direction, and migration is no longer a fortune, but a wound, an inflicted sacrifice" (Bordonaro and Pussetti 2006:139). However, if the migrant situation is individually perceived as temporary, return projects seem an unlikely hypothesis due to the persisting economic and political crisis in Guinea-Bissau. In addition, the condition of illegality in which many migrants are forced to stay, as well as the high cost of flights to Guinea, make even short trips home problematic. So, the impossibility of returning to the land of origin creates this "nearly-disease" that is nostalgia (Beneduce 2004).

Nostalgia is a word formed by the prefix *nostos*, meaning "return", and the suffix *algos*, meaning "pain". This understanding of the term was coined in the late seventeenth century by Johannes Hofer, a doctor of the University of Basel, to define a pathology affecting Swiss soldiers going abroad, as well as women who worked as maids outside their country[5]. The only remedy for the affliction of these exiles was going back home. Therefore, the notion of nostalgia, or homesickness, reveals a strong connection between the suffering of those who emigrated and the awareness that, in this experience, something changes or is lost. According to Pussetti and Bordonaro, this meaning of nostalgia correspondd with the emotional category of "*n'odi*", which in Bijagó language is associated with a particularly dangerous feeling, literally meaning "to say farewell". In the Bijagós islands the distance from close relatives, especially one's own children, is held as a typical source of *n'odi*, which may lead people to illness and even death. Another possible cause of *n'odi* is migration, to the extent that it cuts social and affective bonds, and may be experienced as a form of departure from everyday certainties. Migration is therefore understood ambivalently: while being a common dream, it is also perceived of as a dangerous journey into the unknown. More specifically, *n'odi* may take the meaning of a ritual "call" that, according to Bijagó migrants, their elder relatives would practice in order to attract them and bring them back to their country, to rebuild those links that are threatened or have been cut. Accordingly, *n'odi* would be often identified as the cause of the malaise that affects migrants, producing physical and mental afflictions which appear to be immune to Western medicine. In some cases, *n'odi* could even force migrants to go back to to their villages, in order to restore the fractures and return to health. From the point of view of those who remained at home, this ritual "call" may be seen as a means to maintain and strengthen kinship ties. In other words, it is a defensive mechanism developed by the Bijagó community against the risks of progressive social erosion. From the perspective of those who left, the elders are seen as responsible for their malaise, as they possess the knowledge and the "magical" techniques to force migrants to return to the islands. As Bordonaro and Pussetti described,

[5] This interpretation was proposed in Johannes Hofer's *Dissertatio medica de Nostalgia oder Heimweh*, presented in 1688 at the University of Basel (Prete 1992). Even the German word for nostalgia, *hei-mweh*, joins the idea of "homeland" (*heim*) and that of "pain" or "sickness" (*weh*) (Prete 1992; Beneduce 2004; Taliani and Vacchiano 2006). The same meaning is expressed in the English term "homesickness".

> *N'odi* is certainly a malaise that represents the end of the migratory dream, the fall of illusions, the discontent, the fatigue and wounds of life in Europe. At the same time, however, it represents the strength of the ties with homeland and the power of the family, feeding the myth of return and, in some case, even giving rise to a reverse migratory route - which in this case is also a therapeutic itinerary – from centre to periphery (Bordonaro and Pussetti 2006:145).

Far from being limited to the Bijagós islands, the notion of *n'odi* has an equivalent in Kriol aetiology. In Kriol, the concept of nostalgia in its broad sense may be translated as "*n'disdja*", literally "I miss". To express the feeling of nostalgia of his or her land, a Guinean migrant may say "*ndisdja nha terra*" (I miss my land), but also "*tchon-tchaman*" (the land called me). If the Kriol notion of *tchon-tchama* - formed by the noun "*tchon*" (ground, soil, land) and the verb "*tchama*" (to call) - may be used to convey a general mood of homesickness, its primary meaning has a more specific connotation, which recalls the sense of *n'odi* as a ritual call from home. In fact, among Guineans in the diaspora, mostly coming from Kriol-speaking urban classes, the psychological state of *tchon-tchama* is considered a possible source of illness and even death. As in the case of Bijagó migrants affected by *n'odi*, Guinean migrants afflicted with *tchon-tchama* would suffer from incurable diseases without apparent organic causes. Similarly, in severe cases the only solution is to go back home. Unlike *n'odi*, however, which is thought of as a ritual action performed by the elders remained in the villages, *tchon-tchama* can imply the agency of the whole line of one's own ancestors: by causing illness and misfortune, the forebears are urging their son or daughter to perform specific ceremonies at home. Significantly, when a Guinean migrant is afflicted by recurrent misfortune – including illness and failure in work, school or love – showing the signs of *tchon-tchama*, his or her relatives and friends in the diaspora recommend going to Guinea-Bissau in order to carry out the necessary rituals. If the afflicted migrant decides to go home, he or she would say "*na bai massa tchon*", literally "I will go to trample the land", meaning "I will go home to perform those ceremonies".

The notion of *tchon-tchama* does not appear to be limited to Guinea-Bissau and the Guinean diaspora. Interestingly, it appears to resound with the Wolof idea of *wootal*, literally meaning "call", and used by Senegalese migrants to verbalize a similar condition (Sylla and Mbaye 1990, cited by Beneduce 2004). Like *n'odi* and *tchon-tchama*, *wootal* represents a ritual procedure aimed at bringing the migrant back to his or her home, which is commonly

enacted by mothers and wives remaining in the country of origin, which involves activating the power of the ancestors. As pointed out by Beneduce, this notion has an equivalent in the Dogon notion of *bondu* (also meaning "call"), which is also a ritual practice aimed at calling back the relative who left and has not sent news or remittances to his or her family for an extended period. As observed by the author, the circulation across West Africa and West-African diaspora of these forms of "magic of displacement" (Zempléni 1968, cited by Beneduce 2004) hints at the inherent ambivalence of the migrant condition. According to Beneduce, an intrinsic dualism is generated by the experience of migration, which always implies a separation. Hence, while migration may constitute a search of autonomy for the subject, it also represents a threat to the strength of family ties. Individual malaise and strategies of recall can be understood as forming the dark side of migration: the shady pole in the dialectics of adventure and nostalgia.

Yet, migration is not just a matter of suffering, homesickness and social exclusion. Instead, it may also create a "space of potential", a chance of "double presence" (Blanes 2011), a possibility to expand one's horizons through the act of crossing a frontier. Far from being a product of our times, migration has been a crucial feature of African history over many centuries. As observed by many by anthropologists and historians, human movement across the African continent was not limited to the many existent nomadic groups, but has been a key element of African historicity in general. Moreover, as noted by Jean-François Bayart (1989), African mobility has a crucial political dimension, constituting a weapon in the hands of subordinates which can be used against those in power. In the case of acephalous societies, the "exit option" (Bayart 1989:43) has taken the form of the institutionalized scission of clans and lineages. In the case of larger polities, the availability of land and the portability of agricultural technologies made migration a viable option to escape from the abuse of chiefs and kings. Conversely, the drain of subjects was feared by the powerful, to the extent that their influence depended on the number of people under their authority.

Moreover, Igor Kopytoff (1987) has argued that even the most sedentary African societies have been the outcome of a frontier nomadism, which has left its long-term mark on African history. In Kopytoff's view, the "internal African frontier" is the process whereby most African societies would have been created over time as a result of small groups of pioneers settling across local frontiers at the margins of more complex societies. As argued by

the author, "contrary to a previously widespread stereotype of Sub-Saharan Africa as a continent mired in timeless immobility, its history has emerged to be one of ceaseless flux among populations that, in comparison to other continents, are relatively recent occupants of their present habitat" (Kopytoff 1987:7). In his book, *The African Frontier*, Kopytoff outlined the model of a social and political process inherent to the historicity of African societies. This "political ecology of the frontier" was the outcome of multiple factors: the production of frontiersmen by a social dynamic that periodically ejected people from their kin groups, communities, and polities (due to internal conflicts, witchcraft accusations and ambiguous rules of succession); the habit of disengaging in group from the original society; the existence of an institutional vacuum at the periphery of larger polities; the reproduction of a kin-group model of integration to attract new adherents; the foundation of authority on the status of "firstcomer"; and the existence of a set of values and traditions widely shared in the region. Far from being static, this model corresponds to a cyclical process: the secessionist group would split from the metropolis and reproduce a model of social order at its margins. If stabilized into an integrated society, this new group might undergo a phase of expansion at the expense of neighbouring polities. Otherwise, it would be broken up by internal tensions, or absorbed by similar frontier communities or regional polities.

Kopytoff's description of the "African frontier" shows that migration, far from being a recent phenomenon, is deeply embedded in African history. At the same time, it reveals how the African continent has been inhabited and transformed over time by a spirit of independence and adventure amongst individuals who have dared to go beyond the boundaries of their communities of origin. The notion of adventure is the subject of an article by Ramon Sarró (2009), where the author reflects on the centrality of this category in Sub-Saharan African cultures. Following Georg Simmel (2001), Sarró described adventure as "a moment in the life of an individual who is endowed with a certain 'extratemporality' and 'extraterritoriality'" (Sarró 2009:502). But adventure is also an existential condition, a "form of experience" in which the fullness of life is felt in a particularly acute form: in this specific fraction of time, individual action consciously prevails over social constraints. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the adventurer is a recognized social entity, whose characteristics are similar to the figure of the hero. Similar to the hero of the Mande epic, for instance, the adventurer is "the one who goes beyond the boundaries of the community, one who wants to 'see the world'"

(Sarró 2009:513): the one who, thanks to his own initiative, created a village, killed a dragon, introduced a technology, crossed a river, or went to the world of the dead. According to Sarró, the character of adventurer is the African interpretation of the universal idea that "there are people who remain and people who go away", there are centripetal subjects as well as centrifugal individuals, as in the Biblical history of Esau and Jacob. Although African societies have frequently been depicted as communitarian rather than individualistic, an analysis of African epic, literature and mythology brings to light "the balance, often unstable, in which Africans sail the boat of their personality against two opposing forces: a stormy wind that carries them toward individual success and a rough sea that threatens to dip them into the anonymity of community life" (Sarró 2009:516)(.

Far from being limited to story-telling, the notion of adventure is a key category in the self-representation of many African migrants. Indeed, whereas the European understanding of immigration excludes the heroic dimension, focusing instead on the figure of victim, African migrants prefer to interpret their experience within a framework of adventure. For most of them, "migration is not a 'journey' that one can return from, but a total and radical change in which the individual learns to live his or her life with a full sense conferred by its own motion" (Sarró 2009:504). This correspondence between adventure and migration is reflected in the use, among Senegalese migrants, of the term "*adventurier*" (adventurer) to describe those who attempt to cross the Strait of Gibraltar to reach Europe (Pian 2008). According to Sarró, the idea of migration as adventure is also consistent with the tendency in African cosmologies – similar to other non-Western cultures – to identify Europe as a mythical place. For instance, in many African cultures there is a correspondence between the world of the white people and the invisible world inhabited by spirits and witches. Using a concept introduced by Edwin Ardener (1987), Europe is "remote place" for many Africans, a place that exists firstly in the imagination prior to being experienced as a specific location. According to this perspective, African migrant-adventurers are those who are able to turn Europe from a remote place into a concrete reality, and to connect previously unrelated worlds.

Sarró's analysis employs a concept used by Africans migrants themselves to describe their experience, and is particularly valuable it its portrayal of migration as involving action, initiative and risk, rather than a state of victimhood, trauma or social exclusion. However,

within this narrative adventurers are generally young men, corresponding with the idea of adventure which is a key element of African masculinity, and it appears less appropriate to describe female migration. In Africa, women travel as much as men, their mobility being mainly associated with commerce and networking. In particular, as observed by the Sarró, women's trade mostly takes the form of what in francophone Africa is called *aller-retour*, that is, back-and-forth travel, buying things in Europe and reselling them in the home country. While the role of African women in building and maintaining transnational networks of trade and kinship has been extensively documented (see, among others, Grassi 2003; Havik 2004; Abranches 2012), none of these studies has referred to the category of adventure. Rather, women's movement appears aimed at weaving transactional relationships in and out of their place of origin, in addition to achieving personal success. So, if the male journey is founded on the model of adventure or heroism, female travel seems to be conceptualised in a different way (Sarró 2009).

At the same time, the migration experience of Guinean women appears much more marked by the feeling of nostalgia than that of men. At least, this is the impression I received over the course of my fieldwork. Although it was not a specific subject explored in my interviews, homesickness emerged as a recurrent element in women's narratives and reflections on migration. It is perhaps not by chance that all the narratives of nostalgia reported by Bordonaro and Pussetti were expressed by women. In my view, women's penchant for nostalgia may be ascribed to the specific conditions of migration, which shape the structure of transnational families and may force mothers to live far away from their children for many years. This was the case for my friend Angelina, who was compelled to migrate illegally to Portugal to sustain her family after the death of her husband, and who did not see her last-born daughter for eight years. When she left, her daughter was four years old. The first time she was able to travel home was eight years later, when she eventually obtained a residence permit. When she saw her daughter, who had grown up with Angelina's sister and mother, she did not recognize her. She had left a child and had found a girl. So, whereas male migration may be interpreted through the category of adventure, female travel is marked by a more ambivalent experience, comprising personal achievement and network building as well as painful separation and the longing for home.

As Guillaume le Blanc delineated, the stranger condition may be overcome only though counter-narratives which are able to counteract the offensive labels attached to migrants by the host society. The emphasis on adventure emerging from the discourses of African migrants in their descriptions of their experience appears to signify a process of counter-designation. Yet, as recognized by Sarró, adventure is predominantly associated with an image of masculinity. Besides narratives of heroism, other representations which are less gender-oriented may also surface as alternative views that subject the stranger condition to "a magnificent metamorphosis which turn a designation into a destiny" (le Blanc 2010:193). As I will argue in the next chapter, one such narrative is emerging among Evangelical Guineans in the diaspora.

Samira's heart

Samira, in her twenties at the time of writing, is a girl who came to Portugal with a health visa accompanied by her mother at the age of thirteen. Apparently, she was suffering from heart disease and atrial flutter, but doctors were not able to make an exact diagnosis of her condition. She was Muslim, together with the rest of her family. Her father had worked in Portugal and in France in the past, but had returned to Bissau, where he had a secure job as a business administrator. Her mother was employed in an NGO that worked to counter female genital mutilation and domestic violence.

In Portugal, despite her peregrination from one hospital to another, Samira's illness continued without any clear diagnosis. Her mother even took her to France, where she was diagnosed with psychological disorders. As her problem persisted undiagnosed, her family became increasingly convinced that it had an occult cause. Then, her mother also felt sick, suffering from persistent headaches, giddiness and chronic fatigue, and no doctor was able to cure her. Eventually, Samira's mother interpreted her malaise as due to homesickness, and decided that if she was to die, it should be in her home country. She therefore left her daughter with relatives in Lisbon and returned to Bissau, whereupon Samira's father died in an accident that was also ascribed to witchcraft. In despair, against the advice of her Muslim kin, Samira's mother began to frequent an Evangelical church, where she eventually converted. Following her conversion, she began to feel better, and urged Samira to convert as well, with the help of a relative who lived in Lisbon and was a member of MEL. This brought

Samira to MEL, where she soon converted. That same year she was baptised in water, and later experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit. As she firmly asserted in her interview, after her conversion she was completely cured. At the same time, however, she began to have problems with an aunt with whom she was living. Pastor Eliseu tried to act as a mediator between Samira and her kin, but after a series of violent quarrels he chose to let Samira live in his house. Meanwhile, he urged Samira to continue her studies, and she eventually obtained a degree in tourism. Then, she fell in love with a young member of the church: they soon got married and both left for England, where her husband had found a job.

Samira's story exposes a number of recurrent themes: the predicaments of transnational families; the ambivalence of Guinean migrants towards their homeland, which may be understood alternatively as a protective resource or a source of occult threat; the concern of Evangelical leaders in enhancing the education and personal development of their members; the healing power attributed to Christian faith; and the role of ministers as mediators and substitute heads of the family. In addition, the malaise of Samira's mother appears to have been a typical case of *tchon-tchama*: the land was calling her; the ancestors may have been requiring a ceremony. However, in spite of her return, the curse on the family continued, as revealed by the inexplicable death of Samira's father. At this point, despite the opposition of Muslim relatives, the last resource appeared to be conversion to the Evangelical faith. Indeed, Christ proved to be "the only solution" for Samira and her mother: thanks to His power, they were both healed, and eventually blessed with a successful life. In this case, whereas the distance from home proved to be incapable to overcome ritual obligations and mystic attacks, the action of the Holy Spirit enabled the two women to break free from what they understood as an ancestral curse.

Comparing the "homesickness" of Samira's mother to the "African sickness" suffered by Agostinho, an important difference becomes apparent. In the former case, the return to the homeland is seen as a form of therapy; in the latter, returning to the homeland can be fatal. The contrast between these two narratives prompts a number of reflections. The first relates with the influence of gender on the migratory experience of Guineans living in Lisbon. As I mentioned above, compared with male migration, female movement appears to be less oriented around narratives of adventure than marked by feelings of nostalgia. In the previous paragraph, I speculated whether this apparent greater fragility in relation to distance from

home may be ascribed to a stronger bond between mothers and children, a tie which is threatened by distance and separation. In the case of Samira's mother, although one of her daughters was in Lisbon, her other children remained in Bissau. This may be one of the reasons that her stay in Lisbon was particularly painful and she had a strong desire to return home. Her homesickness was translated into physical pain and bodily symptoms, and travel to Bissau offered a solution that was consistent with the cultural codes familiar to her. By contrast, Agostinho described his permanent residence in Lisbon as worthwhile, not only because of his illness – which would have probably worsened in Bissau - but also because he wanted to "build a future" for his children. In his case, parental love took the form of financial support rather than physical and emotional proximity.

The second reflection relates to the complex and variable ways through which individuals combine different cosmologies and moral systems - in this case, Christian, indigenous and Muslim world views - to make sense of their lives. In the case of Agostinho, who converted to Evangelical religion in his youth, his land of origin was described as a potentially dangerous place, where occult threats were lurking, despite the protection of the Holy Spirit (Agostinho seemed to wonder, for example, whether his faith was strong enough to defend him effectively). In contrast, Portugal was considered a safer place, where the "magic" of sorcerers was weakened by the distance from the places where the source of their power was located. In contrast, Samira's mother might be called a "progressive Muslim", as she was engaged in campaigns against female genital mutilation, a practice which is traditionally performed by some Muslim groups in Guinea-Bissau. Although Samira did not mention *tchon-tchama* in her narrative, her mother presented a set of symptoms which are commonly associated to this particular "sickness" in Kriol aetiology. Accordingly, she decided to respond in the way of any reasonable person afflicted with *tchon-tchama*: by going home. However, whatever its cause, the misfortune that afflicted the family did not stop even after her return, as evidenced by the death of her husband and the persistence of her illness. In Samira's view, it was only God who released her and her mother from the effects of occult powers.

As has emerged from the literature that I reviewed in this chapter, the experience of Guinean migrants, as well as the migrant condition in general, is marked by a dialectics of endeavour and nostalgia. Migration is perceived as a route to autonomy, individual venture

and personal fulfilment, as well as a way to escape from the constraints of a gerontocratic society, the threat of occult powers, and a homeland which is seen as marginal compared to the international centres of the global economy. Yet social exclusion, victimization and inhospitable treatment in the surrounding society generate feelings of nostalgia, and the breaking of family ties causes emotional pain and physical distress. These challenges may be overcome in the form of counter-narratives, as in the case of the category of adventure, used by many African migrants to represent their own experience. However, adventure and heroism seem to belong to a prevalently masculine imaginary. By contrast, women appear to be more prone to nostalgia. As I will argue in the next chapter, Evangelical faith provides believers with less gender-oriented counter-narratives, enabling both men and women to transmute from marginal migrants to missionaries in a heathen land. It is maybe not by chance that MEL, likewise many other African Christian churches, has a prevalently feminine membership.

Chapter 6
City of Palms: Religion, Space, and Place in the outskirt of Lisbon

Now the gates of Jericho were securely barred because of the Israelites.
No one went out and no one came in.
Then the Lord said to Joshua,
"See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands,
along with its king and its fighting men.
March around the city once with all the armed men.
Do this for six days […].
On the seventh day, march around the city seven times,
with the priests blowing the trumpets.
When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets,
have the whole army give a loud shout;
then the wall of the city will collapse and the army will go up,
everyone straight in".
[Josh. 6: 1-5]

In the previous chapter I described the social and cultural features of the Guinean community in Portugal, as well as the historical circumstances of its emergence. Then, following the authors who reflected on the double dimension of the migrant condition, I argued that the life of Guinean migrants in Lisbon is marked by a dialectic of adventure and nostalgia. Lastly, I showed how this dialectic acquires specific features in the case of Evangelical Guinean believers. In this chapter, I will use the case of the Missão Evangélica Lusófona as an example of the role of an African church as a religious and social agent in a suburb of a European city. Firstly, I will delineate some theoretical issues concerning the social production of space and place. Secondly, I will describe how spatial marginalization has been effected in the metropolitan area of Lisbon, with a special focus on the history of Vale do

Forno neighbourhood, where a distinctive social configuration emerged over time, marked by asymmetrical power relations. Thirdly, I will explore the ways in which MEL appropriates and transforms the urban space where it is established, analysing the interplay between MEL believers - mostly, but not entirely, of Guinean origin - the Portuguese inhabitants of the area, and local institutions. Against this background, I will try to describe and interpret the failure of mission attempts in relation to Portuguese neighbours. Finally, I will show how an Evangelical worldview can enable African believers to transform their marginal condition into a discourse of salvation (Blanes 2008).

Eu tomo posse deste lote (I take possession of this plot)

In July 2012, I received the following message from Pastor Saline: "John 15:16. You did not choose me, but I chose you. Next Saturday, join the great evangelization, from 10 to 12 am. God bless you. Pass the message on". So, the following Saturday I was in church, together with seven believers. Elza, a Brazilian member of the congregation who married Pastor Eliseu just one month later, gave us flyers and brochures to distribute and divided us into pairs. I stayed with Elza and David, her nine year old son, and we headed to Encosta da Luz, a nearby neighbourhood. I clarified that I would just put the flyers in mailboxes and avoid face-to-face evangelism. The flyers invited residents to a party for the christening of two newborn babies, which would take place the following Sunday in church, while the brochures contained evangelistic material. David was ashamed, and did not want to talk to people, but Elza encouraged him, stressing that we should be proud to spread the Gospel.

Elza joined MEL in 2008. Before, she was attending the Odivelas congregation of the Igreja de Deus em Portugal (IDP). One day, Pastor Eliseu came there to preach, and Elza immediately felt "something". She liked him, and she liked the MEL band: "that way of praising God through music was so similar to the Brazilian style!" So she decided to join MEL, together with her sister. Later she fell in love with Eliseu, and they eventually married in 2012. Elza told me that it was not the first time that the church had conducted an evangelistic campaign in Vale do Forno. In 2010 the youth group performed an evangelistic concert in Largo da Saudade, a central square where many migrants regularly gather, and which Portuguese residents consider to be a meeting place for drug dealers. MEL youngsters played drums and spoke with their peers, some of whom eventually joined the church. An

evangelistic campaign is also carried out every year at Christmas time, and to make known in the neighbourhood every special event to be performed in church.

It was a hot sunny morning, with few people on the streets. In order to meet people, we went into bars, shops and workshops. In Largo da Saudade, workers were installing water pipes. These works were part of an urban renewal project directed by the Odivelas municipality, aimed at the legalization of the whole area, a clandestine conglomeration including Vale do Forno and adjacent neighbourhoods. The residents' attitude towards this plan was ambivalent, veering between desire for an improvement to their living conditions and fear of possible housing demolition. At any rate, due to lack of resources, the project had so far been slow in getting underway. In Vale do Forno, as well as in Estrada da Luz, housing is extremely heterogeneous, ranging from cottages and three-storey blocks to sheds, mostly made of brick.. The styles and techniques of construction are also quite diverse. Many dwellings have images of saints over the door, or plaques with names such as "Vivenda dos sonhos[1]" or "Vivenda São Pedro[2]". Statues of saints and more secular motifs – such as shells and mermaids – are very common. Similar to other areas of illegal genesis in GreaterLisbon area, landlords built their homes over time, each according totheir own needs, economic means and aesthetic taste. Houses alternate with gardens, vines and fruit trees, and fallow fields, where a few goats and chickens were grazing.

As we walked away from Vale do Forno towards Encosta da Luz, residents of foreign origin - especially from Asia and Africa - gave way to Portuguese residents. When Elza approached people to invite them to the christening migrants were by far more open and friendly than the Portuguese. Elza said that Portuguese people are more closed because they are "idolaters": "For them, Our Lady of Fatima is everything". Yet, she admitted that some individuals are nicer than others. An old lady who was removing the weeds from the wall of her courtyard told us that she was a Catholic, and not interested in our brochures: "I have enough trouble with my priest!" Others avoided any contact, giving back the flyer or letting it fall to the ground. A man told a friend: "these are thise people who do not make me sleep" (referring to the music coming from the MEL's place of worship every Sunday morning). Despite Elza's sweet and friendly attitude, people seemed to be afraid of being "contaminated". After leaving plenty of flyers in letterboxes, we returned to Vale do Forno,

[1] Villaof Dreams.
[2] Saint Peter Villa.

climbing the hill towards the last houses at the top. While walking from Estrada da Luz to Vale do Forno, we passed through a large uncultivated field, crossed by narrow paths, a sort of no man's land on the border between the two neighbourhoods. Elza was walking in front of me, and suddenly, as if in a flash of inspiration, she stopped and began to violently stomp the soil, saying: "Oh my Lord, I take possession of this lot, Thy will be done God!" The scene stayed with me: that small woman with Amazonian features, dressed in a suit and heels, with a red flower in her hair that she had collected just before, was suddenly transformed into a spiritual warrior, with a proud gaze and martial posture. After some minutes, when we resumed the route to Vale do Forno, I asked her what she was doing. She explained to me that the borderland area had been identified by Eliseu as the place where the new place of worship and the annexed community centre would be built in the future.

When we finished distributing our flyers we went to the meeting point, which was at the southern border of Vale do Forno, at the lower edge of the no man's land. Meanwhile, other believers had joined the group, including Eliseu. Finally we were twelve - a seemingly auspicious number, equivalent to the apostles and the tribes of Israel. We formed a circle, and Saline began to explain what was going on in the area: he described how a legalization process was underway, that some houses will be dismantled, but it was generally understood that few will be destroyed as the buildings are made of brick and the State has no money to relocate residents. Then he explained that Eliseu was negotiating with the local authorities about the assignment of that plot, in order to build the new church. So, he stressed, even if we did not have financial resources, we all had to work hard so that the plan will become reality, by praying, remonstrating with the officers in charge, and carrying out social work in the area. Benefactors, even non-Christians, had already made donations because they agreed with the cause and saw the social work of the church. So we had to do our work and allow God to do His work. Then, he proposed the performance of a "prophetical act": like the Jews led by Joshua in front of Jericho's wall we should make seven turns about the area, praying and stamping our feet on the ground (Joshua 6:16-27). But Eliseu did not agree: he was afraid to attract too much attention, as neighbours and bystanders could consider our behaviour "strange". So he instructed us to spread out in various directions and pray, each on his/her own. While the others were following Eliseu's directions, I took some pictures and walked around. Meanwhile, a lady who lived on the other side of the road was watching the scene

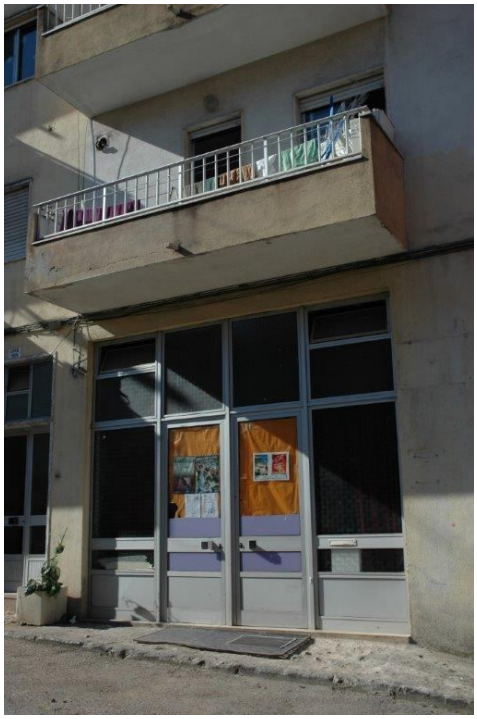
suspiciously. Therefore Saline approached her to explain that they were praying for the municipality to give them that place for worship. Kindly, the lady explained that the land was private property, and was divided into plots belonging to local families (including her own kin). Yet Saline did not back down: on the contrary, he said that it was even better, as the owners could decide to give up their share because they saw the good things that the church was doing for the community. Later Eliseu acknowledged that the municipality's prohibition of building in the area might be an obstacle, so we all had to pray to overcome this problem.

This episode brings to the fore many facets of the "religious spatiality" of Guinean Evangelical Churches in the diaspora (Garbin 2013). I will explore this topic in the following pages, focusing on the case of MEL. On the one hand, through their religious practices and meanings, MEL believers are producing particular localities (Appadurai 1996; Knibbe 2009) and "spaces of alterity" (Garbin 2013) in a specific urban landscape. On the other hand, they are creating "spiritual mappings" (Fancello and Mary 2010)and geographies, which interact with different ways of mapping and place-making by other actors in Vale do Forno, including Portuguese landlords and the local authorities. In the words of David Garbin, MEL is engaged in "a transformative project of spatial appropriation, regeneration and re-enchantment of the urban landscape" (Garbin 2013:677). In this chapter, I will try to analyze both the social and symbolical dimensions of this project: firstly by describing how it as an "objective expression of social status" (Garbin 2013), involving notions of centre and margins, insidersand outsiders; that is to say, in terms of power;secondly, by portraying it as a form of meaning construction that overlaps other geographical imaginings coexisting in the same setting.

It is worth noting that the Biblical idiom expressed by MEL leaders in that sunny morning of 2012 was one of siege, colonization and conquest. In particular, the episode of Jericho appears to be a recurrent trope among Evangelical Guineans, representing evangelization in terms of territorial occupation and spatial expansion. As a Guinean minister once told me, Jericho is the name of the Bissau neighbourhood which became the location of his church. As many believers settled there, and the area became a "land of conquest" for Evangelical soul seekers, the place acquired the name of Jericho, and that is what the inhabitants of Bissau now call it, regardless of their religious affiliation. It is important to note that in Guinea-Bissau this Biblical imagery contrasts with local religious ideas, which tend to see the land as owned by spiritual beings (*iran* in Kriol). According to this traditional

perspective, in order to inhabit a place humans should make a "spiritual contract" with the owner of the land, asking the *iran* permission to settle and establishing a ritual bond with him (Sarró and De Barros forthcoming; see also chapter 2). By contrast, Christian cosmology considers the God of Israel to be a heavenly deity, a conqueror and colonizing divinity who is opposed to Satan, the Prince of Darkness inhabiting the depths of the earth (Fancello and Mary 2010). Hence, a Christian should not come to terms with earthly spirits, but "conquer the land for God". However, this martial metaphor should not be taken literally: "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places", as Evangelical believers used to say (Eph. 6:12).

3. Door with Saint, Vale do Forno



4. Entrance of the MEL's place of cult, Vale do Forno

The "spatial turn" in anthropology and beyond

The late twentieth-century has been marked by a cross-disciplinary "spatial turn" (Knott 2010), involving anthropologists as well as sociologists, historians, and religious studies scholars. The rising interest in issues of space and place is the outcome of theoretical developments, as well as historical change (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003). In a world increasingly criss-crossed by the global flux of goods, people and ideas, ethnographic boundaries, as well as connections between culture and territory, are called into question. As pointed out by Kim Knott, this spatial turn has challenged earlier Cartesian perspectives, focusing attention on social as well as physical dimensions of space, and describing the "social production of space" (Lefebvre 1992 [1974]) as a result of power relations. Such theories, largely based on a Marxist approach, analysed the social production of urban space as the foundation of the reproduction of society; that is, of capitalism itself (Harvey 2001).

Since the 1990s, anthropology has also been affected by a renewed interest in space and place. If the spatial dimension of culture has always drawn the attention of anthropologists, today the acknowledgment that all human behaviour is located is taking on new meanings (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003) Firstly, the assumption that space and place are a question of fact, something that could be taken for granted, has been called into question. As suggested by Arjun Appadurai (1996), many earlier ethnographic descriptions treated spatial dimensions as background rather than foreground. While classical ethnographic descriptions of small-scale societies have included the documentation of natural landscapes and the material conditions of everyday life, recent anthropological accounts have reconceptualised the notions of space, place and locality by stressing their embodied, gendered, and contested dimensions, interpreting locality as a social and cultural artefact (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003). Likewise, the identification between specific locales and the people who inhabit them has been increasingly criticized: this approach led to an artificial localisation of particular groups, producing forms of "descriptive confinement" (Appadurai 1988). According to many authors, the assumption of an isomorphism of space, place and culture hinders understanding of many phenomena, such as forms of life on the frontier and cultural differences within any given locality (Appadurai 1988; Gupta and Ferguson 1992)The analysis of the spatial transformations produced by the economics of late capitalism has been a major concern of recent anthropological accounts, resulting in a plurality of

perspectives. Some authors have focused on how political economy produces space and place in the contemporary world. According to this view, global space is traversed by the flow of goods, people and services, resulting in the homogenization and de-territorialization of human life (Sassen 1996). Others have studied how, within the globalizing economy, people move across national borders, creating new transnational spaces and relationships (Schiller, Blanc, and Basch 2005 [1994]; Ong 1999). Within anthropology, the term "transnational" has been used to describe the way that migrants "live their lives across borders and maintain their ties to home, even when their countries of origin and settlement are geographically distant" (Schiller, Blanc, and Basch 2005:ix)

A third approach focuses on how the processes of cultural globalization, produced by the circulation of electronic media and migrant populations, is radically changing social relations and local places, thus creating new "translocal spaces" (Gupta and Ferguson 1992; Appadurai 1996). As a tool to study translocal spaces produced by global human movements, Appadurai proposed the notion of "ethnoscape", that is to say, "the landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live: tourists, migrants, refugees, exiles, guest workers, and other moving groups and persons constitute an essential feature of the world and appear to affect the politics of (and between) nations to a hitherto unprecedented degree" (Appadurai 1996:33). In Appadurai's view, ethnoscapes are less "objectively given relations" than "perspectival constructs", whose last locus is the individual actor (Appadurai 1996:33). Further, according to the author, the intensification of human mobility does not erase the existence of neighbourhoods[1] and relatively stable communities of residence. Nonetheless, in the global, de-territorialised and diasporic world in which we live the "production of locality"[2] is an increasingly difficult task. Indeed, even if human groups have always been concerned with preserving and reproducing locality to combat its possible dissolution, in the contemporary world the production of locality is affected by specific problems. The first being a growing tension between the modern nation-state which attempts to impose its own definitions of loyalty and affiliation on the geographical areas within its boundaries, and the

[1] Appadurai uses this term "to refer to the actually existing social forms in which locality, as a dimension or value, is variably realized. Neighbourhoods, in this usage, are communities characterized by their actuality (whether spatial or virtual), and their potential for social reproduction" (Appadurai 1996: 179).

[2] By "locality", Appadurai means a relational, social and contextual human artefact, "a complex phenomenological quality, constituted by a series of links between the sense of social immediacy, the technologies of interactivity, and the relativity of contexts" (Appadurai 1996: 178).

work of autonomous local citizens which takes place at a local level. The second involves the increasing disjuncture between territory, subjectivity and collective social movements. The isomorphism of people, territory and sovereignty which constitutes the norm of the modern nation-state is increasingly threatened by the circulation of people. In turn, nation states struggle to maintain control over national boundaries and the flow of people. The result is a surge of violence and conflict on a global scale. The third reason why the production of locality is a more difficult task is the role played by electronic mass media in creating new ruptures between spatial and virtual neighbourhoods. Old and new forms of electronic communication, such as television, e-mail and the internet (and social networks such as Facebook) are creating virtual neighbourhoods, no longer linked to geographical territories, passports, or other forms of political affiliation, which influence the ability of spatial neighbourhoods to produce locality. At the same time, the global flow of images and ideas provide diasporic individuals with new skills, including a wider cultural and political competence alphabetization which they integrate within their spatial neighbourhoods. The result is "a more complicated, disjunct, hybrid sense of local subjectivity" (Appadurai 1996:197). So, the disoriented and moving populations of the present engage in the construction of locality as their antecedents did. However, they have to cope with an unprecedented erosion and dispersion of neighbourhoods as coherent social configurations.

In response to the global changes affecting human societies in the contemporary world, over the last decade a growing literature has emerged concerning the notion of "connection" (Hannerz 1996; Amselle 2005; Gardner 2008; Gardner 2012; Bruijn and Dijk 2012). Scholars have explored the meanings of this term from two main perspectives, focusing either on its cultural dimension or its social aspect. Trying to analyse new configurations of culture in "a time when transnational connections are becoming increasingly varied and pervasive" (Hannerz 1996:4), Ulf Hannerz proposed the notion of "global ecumene". Drawing on Koeber's discussion on ecumene in ancient Greece as "the culture of all humanity" (Kroeber 1945: 9, cited by Hannerz 1996), Hannerz used this term "to allude to the interconnectedness of the world, by way of interactions, exchanges and related developments, affecting not least the organization of culture" (Hannerz 1996:7). In contemporary global ecumene, culture acquires the form of "one single large inventory"

where different "habitats of meaning"[3] intersect. These habitats of meaning, or cultural environments, can overlap and be identified with either individuals or collectivities. On the one hand, in the global ecumene "the local is increasingly demystified, as social organized meanings are at risk to be reinterpreted, reorganized, and even rejected" by individuals (Hannerz 1996:28)(ibid: 28). On the other, the local continues to be important, even if it is increasingly shaped from the outside, and appears to be losing some of its pre-dominance. In particular, cities are the sites where new and vital cultures are emerging, marked by mixture, hybridity, and creolization. It is here that, "in the mingling of old, formerly more separate currents of meaning and symbolic form, new culture also comes into existence" (Hannerz 1996:25).

Moving away from the metaphor of "hybridizing" implicit in the idea of global ecumene, Jean-Loup Amselle (2005) proposed using an IT image to analyse the cultural meaning of "connection":

> By using the electrical or IT metaphor of connection, that is to say a derivation of particularistic meanings from a network of planetary signifiers, one manages to stand out from the approach that sees our globalized world as the product of a mix of cultures, conceived themselves as impervious universes, and to the focus the discussion on the idea of triangulation, that is to say, the recourse to a third element to found its own identity (Amselle 2005:7).

According to this view, collectivities and individuals shape their identities by connecting – in the sense of establishing communication between – specific global meanings. And this is true of all historical ages, as contemporary globalization is necessarily the outcome of previous phases of this phenomenon. In this framework, interconnection is the precondition for the emergence of any cultural form, as "there is no culture without cultures", and global connections have always "provided the mirrors without which the image of different cultures could not take shape" (Amselle 2005:14)

Recently, other scholars have studied the social dimension of transnational connections. In a collective work, Mirjam De Bruin, Rijk Van Dijk and others explored the relationship between connections and social transformation in Africa (Bruijn and Dijk 2012).

[3] By "habitat of meaning", Hannerz means the environment where individual agency operates and which it also produces, and where it finds its resources, goals and limitations.

By moving away from network theory, wherein agency is situated within individuals, these authors shifted the focus on connection itself. In their view, insofar as groups of different socioeconomic status, gender, and age have become increasingly connected to distant places through media, transport, and the exchange of goods and styles, globalization can no longer be considered a new phenomenon in Africa. Here, as elsewhere, the local cannot be considered without the global, as local realities are shaped and reshaped by global connections. As they make different relations possible, connections are seen as "bridges between objects, things, and humans" (Bruijn and Dijk 2012:6). At the same time, they are conceived as a kind of resource, informed by cultural and social repertoires. To the extent that they are resources, connections are never neutral, and are subject to power relations at a local level. Indeed, as James Ferguson (200 6) revealed, within the unequal context of the contemporary global world, connections may result in an aggravation of inequality and new compartmentalisations of social reality. Indeed, if perceived as a form of wealth, connections (as well as disconnections) constitute emic representation, in Africa and beyond. Focusing on this latter aspect, many authors have examined connections as a "precondition for social capital" (Bruijn and Dijk 2010:14).

The notion of social capital inspired many of the recent studies on global connections. In Bourdieu's original definition, social capital is the "aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition" (Bourdieu 1985:248). Hence, social capital is a set of "resources that emerge from one's social ties" (Portes and Landtold 1996), the core idea being that "social networks have value" (Ecclestone and Field 2003:267). Oka Obono and Koblowe Obono examined mobility and connections as forms of social capital in Nigerian society. As the authors observed, a new pattern of global emigration emerged in Nigeria since independence in 1960. This pattern is encapsulated in "a worldview that assessed mobility and the establishment of ties as essential to the formation of social capital and the enhancement of one's material, economic, cultural and political quality of life" (Obono and Obono 2010:227). By analyzing specific and local clichés which shape the imagined character of the mobile person, the authors illustrated the emergence in Nigeria of a shared concept of connections and mobility as the precondition of wealth: "Whether in the sphere of religious leadership, corporate enterprise, or political rule, the idea that connections

are indispensable to personal or professional growth is ingrained in the public mind" (Obono and Obono 2010:237).

Likewise, the concept of social capital is a key notion in Katy Gardner's analysis of the relationship between social mobility, insecurity, and connectedness to Britain in Sylhet, Bangladesh (Gardner 2008). Here, in a context of deep-rooted connections with Britain going back to the 1950s, Britain is perceived by those left behind as a land of economic opportunities and long-lasting security, in contrast with Bangladesh which is experienced as insecure and lacking in prospects. Through long-lasting international migration, families settled in UK and their Bangladesh-based relatives evolved into a new entrepreneurial elite. As observed by the author, "within this context, social connections are vital, for through them links to Britain are produced and maintained" (Gardner 2008:478), despite recent attempts by the British state to disconnect Bangladesh as a supplier of labour. On the one hand, people living in Sylhet employ kinship practices, especially marriage, to move to UK, achieve upwards mobility and establish further links with Britain. On the other hand, families settled in Britain engage in another form of transnational connectedness, in which the political insecurity and social exclusion experienced are counterbalanced by economic and social investment in the homeland, involving notions of belonging and relatedness. Similar to Nigeria, the outcome of these processes in Sylhet is a worldview in which "connectedness to foreign sources of earning is perceived as one of the few ways in which one can secure one's family's future" (Gardner 2008:479). As pointed out by Gardner, in this context "migration and social status are inextricably interlinked" (Gardner 2008:479); kinship links and networks become key forms of social capital.

An underlying tension can be identified from the analysis of this wide and protean anthropological literature about space and place. The exploration of the recent changes affecting the ways in which space is experienced in the contemporary global world discloses an apparent paradox between mobility and locality. In the words of Birgit Meyer and Peter Geshiere, our world appears increasingly marked by "dialectics of flow and closure" (Meyer and Geschiere 1999) 1999). Hence while flows of people, goods and ideas intensify, boundaries seem increasingly porous, and individuals less and less bounded to specific localities. On the other hand, structural conditions affect people's ability to move and while national borders are becoming increasingly open to global markets and states seem to be

ceding elements of their sovereignty, these same states are simultaneously devoting a great deal of energy to controlling and blocking human movement. As a result, large regions of the world are becoming increasingly marginalized. As Mbembe argued, for the poor in Africa globalization only seems to mean "licking at the shop-window" of the world economy (Mbembé 2001). Hence, in the contemporary global world movement is a matter of power. And yet, humans are not just concerned with "mobilities and immobilities" (Vacchiano and Simoni forthcoming). On the contrary, they are devoting much of their time to creating a sense of place in the lands where they find themselves living. Significantly, as I will try to argue in the following pages, one of the basic means by which people continue to make homes and turn space into place is religion.

Religion, space, and place

As Jonathan Smith argued, "map is not territory": maps are not primary representations of space, but intellectual tools to represent space by reinterpreting what we perceive (Smith 1978; see also Sarró 2009). Yet, maps are not only cognitive devices;they also include a moral or ethical dimension. In Smith's words, a "locative map of the world" is "a map of the world which guarantees meaning and value through structures of congruity and conformity" (Smith 1978:292). As David M. Smith (2000)noted, since the 1990s a "moral turn" has gripped many disciplines concerned with issues related to values and space, including geography, sociology, economics, planning, and anthropology. In many areas of study, the awareness that moral assumptions vary considerably from one territory to another, and moralities are "made and remade across space" is increasingly widespread (Smith 2000:5). Understanding ethics as moral theory, or a conscious reflection on moral beliefs, and morality as practical action in everyday life, Smith explores the relationship between morality and space. In particular, he underlined the tension between two tendencies: on the one hand, specific moral rules tend to be pervasive in the sense that they permeate all areas of human life, and are extensive in their scope, in the sense that they claim jurisdiction over all, regardless of their place of residence. On the other hand, moral pluralism and relativism "dilutes the power of a morality which otherwise claims wide if not necessarily universal scope" (Smith 2000:12). In his view, a morally concerned geography has a double task. Its primary role is to stress how ethics and moralities are "embedded within specific sets of social

and physical relationships manifest in geographical space" (Smith 2000:18). At the same time, however, the observation of difference should not deny the possibility that some basic principles could be universally shared, despite their being expressed in different forms. Furthermore, the author affirmed the necessity of recognising the right of all human beings to participate as equals in a "moral conversation" (Benhabib 1992) in which values are debated within specific localities. Finally, the author emphasized that "all geographies are in some sense moral creations, reflecting various ways in which moral understandings and practices guide humankind in making life on Earth" (Smith 2000:22)).

One of the ways in which human groups create maps of meanings and values is religion. Indeed, as many authors have observed, religion is an intellectual and moral activity which enables people to "take place" and "make place" (Knott 2005:43). As observed by Kim Knott (2010), the impact of the late twentieth-century "spatial turn" has been felt in the study of religion as much as in other fields of social sciences. In this area of scholarship, special attention has been paid to urban contexts where sacred and secular domains, as well as a plurality of religious forms, co-exist. Reviewing the recent literature on religion, space and place, Knott distinguished two major trends, a phenomenological and a constructivist approach. Scholars referring to a phenomenological perspective are concerned with the "poetics of space", focusing on the experiences, aesthetics, and sense of the sacred (Knott 2010:31). These works are interested in exploring the existential nature of place and the "senses of place" (Feld and Basso 1996). This latter expression alludes to the role of the human body, and thus of perception, senses and emotions, in shaping sacred spaces, constructing worlds of meanings and transforming space into place (MacDonald 2003).

This trend is in contrast with a social constructivist approach, founded on Marxist and post-structuralist social theories, which is interested in studying the "politics of place and space" (Knott 2010: 33). This latter perspective is concerned with the production, practice, and representation of space, and its relationship with knowledge and power. In the last decade, scholars of religions have been especially interested in observing the struggles between different groups of religious actors over public space, and between secular states and religious communities over specific locations. These studies revealed how places, particularly urban settings, are frequently informed by diverse and competing discourses and practices, be these of a secular or religious nature (Chidester and Linenthal 1995; Stump 2008; Gale 2005)

In addition, a series of methodological tools have been proposed for the analysis of the multiple dimensions of the "location of religion" (Knott 2005).Besides existing work on the poetics and politics of sacred space, many anthropologists have also recently studied the ways in which transnational movements transform the global religious landscape, often subverting previous assumptions about centre and periphery. As Pnina Werbner highlighted, religious diasporic centres are becoming expanding spaces of Islamic knowledge and spiritual power. Indeed, diasporic Islamic communities create new translocal spaces, re-centring the sacred topography of global Islam and de-centring Western dominance, appropriating and re-inscribing space in alternative ways (Werbner 1996). Similarly, contemporary Christianity is involved in a dual trend: firstly, the shift of its centre of gravity from Europe and Northern America to Africa, Asia and Latin America - a process that has been called the "southernization of Christianity" (Jenkins 2006; Jenkins 2011); secondly, the emergence of new forms of Christianity in Europe and USA, owing to migration. Scholars of Christianity have drawn attention to the explicitly global aspirations of particular Christian movements and the ways in which their religious practices are intimately intertwined with the processes of globalisation (Coleman 2000).. At the same time, many researchers have pointed out how Evangelical and Pentecostal Christianities enable individual believers to more successfully navigate translocal spaces (Van Dijk 1997).

In a recent issue of *African Diaspora*, Kim Knibbe, Marten van der Meulen and others, focusing on the Amsterdam case, revealed how, following migratory movements, African Christianities are themselves constituting spaces and become entangled in particular European localities (Knibbe and Meulen 2009). The authors called into question the term "deterritorialisation", since it does not adequately describe the processes they analysed. Despite being aware that nowadays global networks are an essential modality through which world religions relate to territoriality, they warned not to overestimate the deterritorialising effect of transnationalism. Rather, they proposed the study of how transnational religious movements affect ways of relating to territories, producing specific places and transforming particular locales.

The case of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) described by Kim Knibbe in the issue cited is "a prime example of the self-conscious production of a religious geography through the production of localities" (Knibbe and Meulen 2009:126). Knibbe's

starting point was the assumption that maps and geographies, as acts of classification that relate a location to a broader view of the world in spatial terms, shape the particular cityscapes inhabited by individuals. On this basis, Knibbe demonstrated how "producing the local" is crucially important to the goals of this Pentecostal church founded in Nigeria, and how this relates to the mapping and the production of religious geographies. Knibbe illustrated both how particular localities produced by the RCCG are crucial in establishing transnational linkages and how the spaces in which African Christians in the South East of Amsterdam move are produced by the mapping of various actors. While in the view of many African Pentecostals, South East is a territory which should be reclaimed for Jesus, other maps, namely those created by the police and local media, pinpoint this neighbourhood as a centre of Nigerian crime. In both cases, maps "turn out to be a powerful means to mobilise money and people to produce long-lasting results" (Knibbe 2009:133). Mapping, in short, is a matter of power.

Similar to other articles in this issue, Knibbe's text demonstrated how transnationalism and localism should be viewed as two strategies used by African churches in different situations. According to Marten van der Meulen, which strategy becomes relevant to the observer depends from which perspective this transnational–local dynamic is observed. "From an individual perspective, migration is immensely flexible. But congregations are much more fixed. Congregations as institutions become embedded in local society and nurture a practice of continuing engagement with local society, even when individual members move elsewhere" (Meulen 2009:177). Ultimately, this scholarship revealed how, while inserted within a transnational religious network, African Christianities in the diaspora are producing places and becoming practically, economically, politically and symbolically entangled in particular European cities.

The quoted works on the role of religion in producing space and place expose the afore-mentioned paradox between travelling and taking root, "flow and closure" (Meyer and Geschiere 1999). A particularly successful synthesis of these two aspects of globalization, with a special focus on religious experience, is presented by Thomas Tweed (2009). In his *Crossing and Dwelling: a Theory of Religion*, the author expounded his theory of religion by using spatial and aquatic metaphors. In his words, religions are "confluences of organic-cultural flows that intensify joy and confront suffering by drawing on human and supra-

human forces to make homes and cross boundaries" (Tweed 2009:168). The crucial tropes contained within this definition are those of crossing and dwelling. While religions are related to flow, movement and the creation of long-distance bonds, religious practices and beliefs provide orientation, enabling people to confront the suffering associated with their dislocation and, ultimately, to "make homes". Taking as a paradigmatic example the Cuban American annual celebration at the Our Lady of Charity shrine in Miami, Tweed illustrated how "the displaced community turned to religion to make sense of what they understood as moral evil: the exile from the island and the separation from family members who remained" (Tweed 2009:168) . Hence, Tweed argued, religion is simultaneously about being in place and moving across boundaries. His reflections are reminiscent of Jonathan Smith's theory of religion, wherein dwelling plays a crucial role as well:

> What we study when we study religion is one mode of constructing worlds of meanings, worlds within which men find themselves and in which they choose to dwell […]. Religion is the quest, within the bounds of the human, historical condition, for the power to manipulate and negotiate ones 'situation' so as to have 'space' in which to meaningfully dwell […]. Religion is a distinctive mode of human creativity, a creativity which both discovers limits and creates limits for humane existence. What we study when we study religion is the variety of attempts to map, construct and inhabit such positions of power through the use of myths, rituals and experiences of transformation (Smith 1978:290).

The images of "map" and "mapping" are particularly apt to describe the complex ways in which MEL and its members inhabit the land in Vale do Forno. These tropes will assist me in analysing how the church is producing specific spiritual geographies, which interact with other conflicting maps coexisting in the same territory. Finally, on the basis of this analysis, I will explore how religious practices and beliefs are enabling MEL's members to dwell in the place in which they chose to live, and to make sense of their migrant condition.

Spatial marginalization in the Lisbon region

Once the capital of a global Empire, and central to what has been called the first world-system (Wallerstein 2011 [1976]), over the course of the last century Lisbon has experienced a process of gradual marginalization, while remaining connected to the current global economic system. Capital of a state that is currently undergoing a deep economic

crisis, it is halfway between what has been called a "global city" (Sassen 2013; Cohen and Cohen 2008), and a centre of regional importance, whose main role is played on a national stage. A little secluded from the East-West axis that connects the major international financial and economic centers – including cities such as New York, London, Paris and Frankfurt – it nevertheless shares some of the features that recent studies have attributed to contemporary global cities:firstly, due to its strategic position on the Atlantic shore, Lisbon is an important global transport centre, its airport constituting a crucial hub in the network between Latin America, Western Africa and Europe. Secondly, it hosts many transnational corporations, and is the headquarters of several international political institutions, including two European Union agencies (EMSA[4] and EMCDDA[5]). Thirdly, it has a particular socio-occupational structure, with a stark dichotomy between a stratum of professionals, financers and people working in the global information sector, and a stratum of low-skilled workers, largely employed in the informal sector and often coming from other countries. These characteristics make Lisbon a metropolis connected to the world economy. Nonetheless, Lisbon plays a major role in a national sense, forming the centre of Portuguese political and economic power. Lisbon's social and cultural configuration differs markedly from the areas surrounding the city: it is intensely populated and hosts the largest percentage of foreign citizens in the country; the majority of Portuguese economic activities are focused on the capital; it forms both the a national and global centre of Portuguese culture; it is cosmopolitan and international, and is distinct from the rest of the country in terms of its cultural and religious pluralism.

Over the last sixty years, Lisbon has undergone an intense urbanization process, which transformed the Portuguese capital and its surroundings into a metropolis. Today, the Metropolitan Region of Lisbon (MRL) includes nineteen municipalities, located north and south of Tejo River. This area is the most densely populated in the country, as well as being home to the majority of the country's economic activities (Soares and Domingues 2003)[6]. The origins of the demographic boom of the MRL can be traced to the 1950s. Since that time the area has been undergoing a gradual suburban expansion, initially due to an internal rural-

[4] European Maritime Safety Agency (http://www.emsa.europa.eu).
[5] European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (http://www.emcdda.europa.eu).
[6] In 2001, the Metropolitan Region of Lisbon, which constitutes about 3.3% of the national land mass, was home to 2,662,949 residents, which is more than 1/4 of the Portuguese population (as opposed to only about 1/6 in 1960) (Soares and Domingues 2003).

urban exodus, and later as a result of international migration flows. Before the mid-1970s, changes in agricultural production, a high rural birth rate and a rising working force demand in the manufacturing sector, prompted internal migrants from rural regions to settle in the Lisbon area.

Jorge Malheiros (2002) illustrated how since this time, Lisbon's expansion has been marked by processes of both social and spatial segregation. During the *Estado Novo* (New State),period the Salazar government promoted the manufacturing sector, privileging the Lisbon region due to its central position in a profoundly hierarchical political structure, its close connections with the Portuguese colonies and its good infrastructure. As the economic and political elites (closely interrelated groups), viewed low labour costs as the most competitive element of the Portuguese production system, employers endeavoured, successfully, to keep wage costs down[7]. As a result, the mass arrival of unskilled internal migrants dramatically increased demand for low-cost housing in the area (Malheiros 2002). The government attempted to address the lack of affordable accommodation through three strategies: the freezing of property rents; large-scale social housing projects; and the non-control of slums and *"bairros clandestinos"* (urban settlements built without housing permits in areas lacking infrastructure). However, as the demographic concentration in MRL intensified throughout the 1970s and beyond, the market continued to be controlled by private agents (Salgueiro 1977). In addition, the policies described had a strong impact on urban spatial organization, pushing working class residents to social housing estates and low-quality clandestine neighbourhoods in the suburbs. Hence, the capitalist development of the region in the 1960s and 70s led to early processes of social segregation (Salgueiro 1983)

The spatial organization of Lisbon region underwent a particularly dramatic change over the years 1974-76. Following the 1974 Revolution and the subsequent decolonization process, more than half a million people arrived from the ex-colonies, including *retornados* (Portuguese people who had settled in the colonies) as well as African and Asian migrants, placing further pressure on the real estate market. Although the new democratic government maintained the social housing programme and the fixed rents policy, illegal dwellings underwent a dramatic increase.

[7] Portuguese wages have been among the lowest in Europe up until the present day.

As illustrated by Teresa Barata Salgueiro (1977), in the 1970s clandestine neighbourhoods started to form a belt surrounding the city centre, settled along an ancient military road. According to Salgueiro, the early development of an illegal housing market in the Lisbon region can be linked to commercial as well as demographic processes. These urban settlements evolved along the administrative borders between different districts, where land was sloped and hence quite inexpensive, as these areas were classified as rural in urban zoning. The new settlers' choice of marginal areas of sometimes undefined territorial jurisdiction was aimed at evading the control of local officials. As observed by Salgueiro, in the 1970s the land market of Lisbon and its environs was dominated by landowners and housing speculators. By exerting influence over urban planning and restricting the availability of land for building, land owners and housing agents contributed to a rise in the price of urban real estate. As a result, large areas remained excluded from urbanization plans, and were thus available for clandestine building. As the legal housing market was unaffordable to the lower classes, much of the working population resorted to living in illegal dwellings.

Nevertheless, the marginal housing market was also subject to commercial rules and speculation. Usually, housing agents bought low-cost rural land located outside the urban planning limits, constructed streets with bulldozers with little concern about the soil's geological features, divided the land into further plots, and finally sold them at a much higher price. Frequently, buyers were unskilled workers employed in the construction and industrial sectors, whose building skills enabled them to construct their own houses. The first buildings were quite simple one-storey dwellings, as constructors feared inspections by local authorities. However, as long as constructions were built one after the other the risks to be fined decreased, and the tolerance of f administration endorsed the gradual establishment of a factual situation. At a later stage, construction became profit-focused. By dividing the rooms and constructing new floors builders aspired to rent out the largest possible number of spaces. Although rents were relatively cheap, as the initial investment was low the profit margin of profit was almost equivalent to that of the legal market (Salgueiro 1977).

Over the years, various factors – such as the time available for building, the topography, the investment capacity, and the desire for profit – conspired in producing great heterogeneity amongst illegal neighbourhoods, in terms of the dimension, type and social composition of local dwellings (Salgueiro 1977). Since the 1970s, Lisbon's clandestine urban

development has included semi-detached houses and shanties, as well as large estates. Despite this diversity, the housing constructed shared certain characteristics: poor infrastructure, a lack of geological safety and the provision of inadequate living conditions. While they had a continued presence on Lisbon's landscape, the *"bairros clandestinos"* experienced many transformations over the following decades, engendered by historical processes which affected the whole region.

One of the most significant changes which impacted upon these neighbourhoods was the inflow of new migrants, mostly from African countries, who joined the early internal migrants. The trend toward spatial clustering was propelled by the plentiful supply of illegal low-cost flats in suburban districts, as well as the dynamic networking mechanisms which existed amongst migrant communities. Hence, as noted by Malheiros, since the second half of the 1970s the socio-spatial segregation of Lisbon incorporated an "ethnic dimension" (Malheiros 2002). Migrants from the former African Portuguese colonies, such as Cape Verde, Angola and Guinea Bissau, who became numerically dominant within the foreign population, settled in large numbers in the shanty towns of the urban fringe and in more restricted pockets of the inner suburbs, resulting in a diversification of urban marginality. Since that time, the geography of marginal suburbs has reproduced the social and racial polarization of the metropolis as a whole. On the one side, in the older concrete urbanizations new migrants from overseas have cohabitated with *retornados* and earlier residents who became established there following the rural exodus. On the other side, most shanty towns have been predominantly inhabited by migrants coming from the former African Portuguese colonies and by a minority of Gipsies. Hence, these "post-colonial slums" (Ascensão, forthcoming) have brought together the most marginal groups within the MRL.

Throughout the 1980s, far-reaching economic transformations had a dramatic impact on the urban restructuring of the city and its surroundings. However, the segregation processes involving the MRL which occurred in the previous decades continued, albeit in different forms. The mid-1980s marked a new era for Portugal, characterized by economic liberalism and openness to the outside world. Many nationalized companies were privatized, and a process of privatization affected some public services as well, such as health and education. Meanwhile, the erosion of the industrial mass-production system led to the introduction of more flexible forms of work. These transformations led to profound social

changes, increasing the poverty, vulnerability and precariousness of large sections of the workforce. At the same time, Portugal's entry into the European Community in 1986 enhanced the internationalization of the Portuguese economy: foreign direct investment rose dramatically during the late 1980s and early 1990s, while a large amount of money from EU structural funds began to stimulate the Portuguese economy. The main areas affected by foreign investment were the service sector, such as banking and insurance, as well as private and public construction (Malheiros 2002).

These economic processes had a specific impact in the Lisbon region. In fact, although somewhat peripheral within Europe, the Portuguese capital fulfilled a number of conditions which held great potential for foreign investors, such as the presence of the most important national decision-makers in both the public and private sectors, significant overseas links with Africa and the Americas, and an attractive natural and urban environment. Moreover, due to its low cost of living by European standards, Lisbon offered a very favourable cost/quality ratio for qualified labour (Malheiros 2002). Attracted by this favourable setting, a large number of white-collar professionals from the main investor countries arrived in the MRL. These high-status expatriates, coming mostly from Northern Europe and employed in the service sector, settled in the western municipalities of Oeiras and Cascais, areas with up-market housing and high land prices. In contrast, the growing construction sector, characterised by mechanisms such as subcontracting and moonlighting (undeclared work), employed a growing number of migrants who mostly came from African countries. African migrants found themselves involved in a pattern of work specialization, with men employed in construction and women working in services such as domestic and industrial cleaning. These new-comers continued to settle in the northern and southern outskirts of the city.

In the wake of these economic transformations, the composition of the foreign population of MRL was increasingly marked by a duality, which had a geographic parallel in the residence patterns of migrant communities. Hence, among this heterogeneous population, professional qualifications and socio-professional status were closely correlated with geographic origin and urban localization in the city (Malheiros 2002). A further source of spatial inequalities in the Lisbon metropolitan region since the mid-1980s has been urban restructuring. A mixture of national and foreign capital was invested in the refurbishment of the transport and road system, in the rehabilitation of old quarters in the city centre, and in the

radical regeneration of eastern Lisbon following the Expo 98 project. These processes of urban renewal increased housing prices in many areas, where previous lower-income inhabitants were replaced by higher-status professionals. A further wave of vulnerable groups, including unskilled migrant workers, was thus driven out from the regenerated areas and consequently joined the swelling ranks of suburb dwellers. Hence, the processes of urban restructuring reinforced ongoing trends of spatial segregation, with less favoured groups continuing to be concentred in large social housing complexes, as well as in the illegal housing sector.

Over the past two decades, the MRL social landscape has been marked by an exponential growth and an internal differentiation of the foreign population, with a consolidation of migration from African countries and a rise in the number of citizens from Brazil and Eastern Europe. These new in-flows did not reverse the spatial organization of MRL, and mechanisms of segregation remain unchanged. Residential patterns in MRL continue to be marked by a clear polarization: the middle-upper classes living in high-grade condominiums and rehabilitated flats in the city centre, as well as in new detached villas in smart suburbs; the lower classes, including unskilled migrant workers, inhabiting "problem areas" in the outskirts and suburbs, living in low-grade social housing and clandestine accommodation and squatting unfinished buildings.

Since the 1990s, the MRL suburbs have received investment according to urban restructuring plans financed by the Portuguese government and the European Community. This process has included the renovation, structural improvement and legalization of clandestine urban settlements, as well as the eradication of shanty towns. Following the demolition of shanty towns the population was relocated to large social housing developments. In 1993, the Portuguese government created the *Programa Especial de Realojamento* (Special Rehousing Programme), aimed at supporting local municipalities in the eradication of the existing shanty towns, as well as in the relocation of residents of these areas to council houses. Implementation of this programme was preceded by a census of the families living in shanty buildings, which took place in 1993 and served as an eligibility document for participating in the relocation. However, as residents who settled later were not registered in the survey, many inhabitants were excluded from the programme and had no right to resettlement.

While the programme aimed to increase the choice available to inhabitants and create a pattern of more dispersed settlement, in practice it failed to achieve the expected results. Relocation led to the dispersal of vital ties of identity and mutual assistance, while the existing spatial clustering of migrant groups was maintained (Malheiros 2002). Moreover, many slum dwellers were simply displaced without any compensation. Further, fatal conflicts followed the demolition of buildings and the displacement of people were marked by police violence, as in the recent case of the *Bairro Santa Filomena,* which was demolished in 2012. These events are extreme but paradigmatic examples of how the spatial segregation of migrants, particularly those of African origin, can be understood as inextricable from racial discrimination, disregard for human rights, and urban cleansing.

Vale do Forno

Vale do Forno is a suburb of illegal genesis, situated on the side of a hill on the north-western border of Lisbon. This neighbourhood of 1,800 inhabitants is part of an area which has been named Vertente Sul do Concelho de Odivelas (Southern Slope of Odivelas District) Due to their common history, the five neighbourhoods in this vicinity (Vale do Forno, Encosta da Luz, Quinta do Zé Luís, Serra da Luz, Quinta das Arrombas) form a spatial and social unit, separated from neighbouring areas by both natural and urban borders; the adjacent areas belong to other city administrative bodies. The whole area is bounded on the North by a river and a highway (the A8), and on the South by the northern boundary of Lisbon District. Parts of the ancient Lisbon wall are still visible on the upper side of the hill. On the Eastern and Western side, the suburb is demarcated by two ring roads (the CRIL and the CREL). Vale do Forno lies at the eastern side of the conurbation, close to the Senhor Roubado metro station

Similar to the whole of Vertente Sul, over the final three decades of the twentieth century Vale do Forno was transformed by illegal construction. The occupation of the land took place informally and without regulated planning. This development resulted from a range of factors, including increasing demand for housing located near the capital, the lack of low-price real estate and the relative tolerance of local and national government. The first group to colonize the area in the 1970s were working-class people arriving from the interior of the country who were largely employed in the industry and construction sectors, often working for the same companies. These early settlers, who now own most of the housing

stock, stores and workshops, built their houses according to their own taste and ability. This informal "colonisation" resulted in a heterogeneous and quite degraded conglomeration. Most of the houses are semi-detached concrete constructions on one or two floors, often with a workshop at the ground-floor level, but there are also some three-storey buildings and detached houses with a yard. Due to the presence of vegetable gardens and green spaces, Vale do Forno is a fairly quiet place with a countryside feeling. However, it lacks infrastructure (such as water and sewerage system) social services, public spaces, shops, and structural safety of buildings. Geological surveys have also defined the area as one of low geotechnical security, prone to landslides due to its pronounced slopes.

During the 1990s, the social composition of the neighbourhood changed dramatically, following the general trend of investment in the outskirts of Lisbon. A foreign population became established in the area, which included migrants from several African countries, Brazil, Eastern Europe, India and Pakistan. While the original residents remained in their houses as owners, the newcomers became tenants, attracted to the area by relatively low rents. At the same time, these incomers were generally less rigorous than Portuguese tenants in requiring a formal lease from landlords. Because of the illegal origins of the neighbourhood, demographical data about the Vale do Forno population are not reliable[8]. However, walking on the streets and observing the physical appearance and style of dress of residents, the coexistence in the area of large groups of foreign migrants, together with a core of Portuguese inhabitants, is immediately apparent. Many workshops and warehouses are rented out to small businesses, such as garages and workshops. The population of Vale do Forno changes throughout the course of the day, with people coming to their workplaces in the morning and leaving the area to local residents in the evening.

In the whole of Vertente Sul, these changes resulted in a multifaceted society, which includes the presence of some extremely marginalised residents[9]. Although many of the families who own their own homes have good living conditions and acceptable income, other residents, especially those who rent, live in decaying houses and face problems of scarce and

[8] According to the data on the Odivelas Municipality website, in 2008 more than 85% of the population was Portuguese. The percentage of foreign residents is growing, as it increased from 11% in 2001 to 14% in 2008. Within the migrant community, nationalities are distributed among PALOP (8%), Eastern Europe (3%) and Brazil (3%).
Cf. http://62.48.168.230/pruvsco/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3&Itemid=16.

[9] *Diagnóstico Social da Vertente Sul* (Centro Paroquial de Famões 2008). This picture is confirmed by my interviews with local officers and social workers.

insecure income, limited skills and unemployment[10]. According to a recent survey (Centro Paroquial de Famões 2008), the non-Portuguese are in less skilled jobs and earn lower incomes, even in cases where they are better educated than Portuguese inhabitants[11].

The lack of social, educational, cultural and sports facilities, and the phenomena of marginalisation - social deprivation and poverty - and the integration problems caused by the rapid influx of a migrant population, has resulted in social segregation, tensions and latent social unrest in recent years. In an attempt to address the problems of urban, social and economic decay the local administration implemented an urbanisation programme aimed at legalising the whole area. Consequently, in 2008 Vertente Sul was classified as a critical area of urban "recuperation and reconversion"[12] and since 2009 it has been part of an urban renewal plan run by Odivelas Council in partnership with a group of local bodies[13]. The principal partners were house-owner organizations[14] which invested in the programme with private capital, but a wide range of local associations were also involved[15]. The approach which inspired the programme was one of collaborative planning, aimed at including the local population in the regeneration process. The project included the demolition of almost two hundred houses located in areas not suitable for construction and at risk of collapse, and the subsequent relocation of inhabitants. The creation of various social facilities, as well as the implementation of infrastructure works was also planned. As local house-owners made a substantial contribution to the funding of the project, they acquired a crucial role in the participation process, and were able to influence planning. While they proved willing to bear the costs of the legalization process in the hope that this would improve quality of life in the

[10] The *Diagnóstico Social* conducted a questionnaire survey amongst 251 families residing in the five neighbourhoods of the *Vertente Sul*, which included a total of 763 citizens. Within this sample, 42% of those with fixed employment earned an income of between € 501 and € 1000, while 29% earned under 500 € per month. Among those with temporary work, the majority (about 80%) received between 251 and 500 € per month. Most retirees were receivingpensions of between 251 and 500 €, with a minority receiving less than 250 € per month. Among recipients of unemployment benefit, the vast majority was receiving up to 500 €. In conclusion, the vast majority of residents surveyed earned incomes lower than the average wage in Portugal, which is around € 887.5 (OECD 2002, Economics supplement of the *Público* newspaper, 3rd of March 2003). Cf. http://clds-vs.ccparoquial-famoes.org/?page_id=926.

[11] One of the indicators which demonstrates the social marginalization of the population is the low level of education. Among the residents included in the *Diagnóstico Social*, the dominant level of educationis the "1st cycle" (up to grade 4). Moreover, according to the 2001 Census, almost 20% of the population in the area could neither read nor write (NERSCO, 2005).

[12] Área Critica de Recuperação e Reconversão Urbanística (ACCRU).

[13] The project (Plano de Acção) was financed by the "Parceria para a Regeneração Urbana" program, supported by the European Commission and the Portuguese Government.

[14] Comissões de Administração Conjunta (CAC), led by owners of multi-family buildings.

[15] The ACL were also implicated in the partnership (see chapter 4).

area, they were not willing to submit to large-scale demolition. Today, the programme has reached an impasse, and is far from concluded. Some urban improvement activities have been completed on time, including the installation of sewage systems and other basic infrastructure, the creation of an internal road that links the five neighbourhoods, and a bus route which connects the area with other key sites in the district. However, despite the efforts of the local administration, due to a lack of public resources and conflicts with local landlords, the planned initiatives have not had the results expected. Few buildings have been demolished and most problems have not been resolved, including the issues of geological risk and urban decay.

Long-term residents recount the recent history of Vale do Forno through family trajectories. According to these narrative accounts, many owners initially built their houses as part of a long-term settlement project. Buildings were large because they were destined to accommodate the children of residents and their future families. However, as the second generation experienced upward mobility and settled in middle-class neighbourhoods, many apartments remained empty and became available for rent, which led to the arrival of new-comers in the area. This is the story I have been told in conversations with old residents. However, in the light of Salgueiro's account of Lisbon's "bairros clandestinos", I wonder weather the story is amenable to a different telling. According to Salgueiro, informal self-construction can be viewed as an entrepreneurial project conceived by low-class smallholders in order to make profits (Salgueiro 1977). If this hypothesis is correct, illegal housing in Vale do Forno – like in other areas in the outskirt of Lisbon - would have had a commercial side from the outset..

What is clear is that since the 1990s, a new social configuration emerged in Vale do Fornos marked by the presence of two groups: landlords, mostly Portuguese people who came from the interior of the country in the 1970s, and tenants, more recent settlers of mainly foreign origin. It is worth noting that both groups were composed of migrants, who colonized the land in successive migratory waves. Although they characterize themselves as landlords and early settlers, the original inhabitants arrived there as internal migrants, at the time of the Portuguese rural-urban exodus. This "foreign" identity is revealed by the name of the central square of Vale do Forno, Largo da Saudade (longing square), which seems to hint at a distant home territory.

This social dualism has a spatial parallel: while the lower areas tend to be inhabited by Portuguese owners, the higher land is mostly occupied by migrants. Houses situated in the most inaccessible locations at risk of landslides are inhabited by people coming from Cape Verde, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Brazil, Ukraine, Romania, India and Pakistan. Further, while the original settlers reside in the best-quality dwellings, they rent the houses which are in the worst condition to new migrants. The two groups also differ in terms of residence patterns: while landlords tend to have a fixed domicile, foreign tenants are more mobile. As noted by a local social worker,

> This is a zone of transition. People who come here do not have another place to live. So, either they stay on this soil because they were born and grown up here, or because they do not have another place to live[16].

In Vale do Forno, the landlords have organised themselves into two institutions: the AUGI (Administração da Área Urbana de Génese Ilegal)[17] and the AMOVALFLOR (Associação de Moradores de Vale do Forno)[18]. The former is exclusively composed of home- owners, as it was created to represent the interests of the landlords in the frame of the regeneration programme implemented by the local government. By contrast, the latter organisation is theoretically open to all inhabitants, be they owners or occupants. However, as it was created by landlords, it has not substantially involved any tenants. Mrs Sophia, fifty-eight years of age and who has resided in Vale do Forno for thirty-nine years, is an example of how the same families occupy most of the key positions within local institutions. She sits on the Parish Council, an active member of AMOVALFLOR, as well as a leader of the local Catholic community. Her husband, Mr Mario, is the chairman of the AUGI directorate as well as the president of the association of residents.

According to some officials and social workers many barriers emerged between owners and tenants over time, which serve as obstacles to their daily communication. As affirmed by the manager of a project dedicated to the social, educational and economic development of *Vertente Sul*,

[16] Interview with Carla Rothes Ladeira, supervisor of the social projects implemented by the *Associação Rute*, a local organization operating in the *Vertente Sul* area.
[17] Administration of The Urban Area of Illegal Origin.
[18] Association of Residents of Vale do Forno.

> Basically one of the things that we want is the crossing over of cultures. And when we organise activities, we would like people to attend them. However, sometimes it is complicated because, for instance, owners scarcely mingle with tenants. They think that if it is for them, then it is not for us[19].

It is also interesting to note how, in the stereotyped representations of landlords, tenants are categorised as a unified whole. Within the home-owners' discourse, the categories of migrant and tenant are frequently conflated, without taking into account the presence of Portuguese renters. In general, the migrant-tenant group is represented as a combination of negative features: arrogant, uptight, profiteering, lazy, involved in illegal activity, recipients of undeserved state assistance, etc. When talking about tenants, president of the association of residents affirmed:

> We are working for this to change, and these guys, we are working for them and they do not want to collaborate, you see? This happens. [...] These guys do nothing, they don't want to work, and why not? [...] There are many state benefits, too many handouts. So they have enough money enough in their purse and they do not want to work, that's what I think. If they had a job...
>
> […] There are many [who get state benefits]. Many. We have Moldovans and Ukrainians living here, they worked for seven or eight months in a firm, they were all sacked and now they are living here on 700-800 euro a month. They do nothing, and they stay here all day. [...] They collect their benefit, hang around and doing nothing. That's why the Portuguese government is in crisis, Italy is in crisis and Spain is in crisis, because of this. I've never received any state handout, [...] and these people live here at the expense of all of those who work. Much of the assistance not fair.

It is worth noting that, as attested to by a local police officer[20], crimes and episodes of violence are no more numerous in Vale do Forno than in other areas of Lisbon. Yet talking to

[19] Interview with Benedita Lima, project manager of the *Contrato Local de Desenvolvimento Social da Vertente Sul de Odivelas*, a programme financed by the Portuguese Government and coordinated by the *Centro Comunitário Paroquial de Famões.*
[20] Informal interview, 2012.

local residents one has the impression of widespread insecurity due to the presence of foreign people who are viewed as outsiders and often accused of aggressive behaviour and illegal behaviour. In fact, the local police station regularly receives anonymous complaints about noise and supposed illegal activity, which is generally blamed on unidentified groups of foreigners. Despite these complaints having no legal repercussions, they reflect the pervasive mistrust in which migrants are held by the local Portuguese population.

These relational dynamics may be analyzed in terms of what Norbert Elias and John Scotson deemed an "established-outsiders configuration" (Elias and Scotson 1994). Describing a suburban British neighbourhood called Winston Parva, the authors demonstrated how a dualistic social formation emerged over time between an "established" community who settled in the area some decades before and an "outsider" group. The only difference between the two groups was the duration of their residence. Longevity of habitation constituted an advantage because it enabled the first settlers to establish solid group cohesion, collective identification and compliance with common norms. This high degree of organization enabled the established families to reserve positions in local organizations such as the council, church or clubs, and to exclude others from these roles. By contrast, as the newcomers were strangers in relation not only to the old residents but also to each other, they lacked internal integration and communality. As a consequence, they were not able to challenge the exclusion and stigmatization exercised by the established group which was used as a powerful means of maintaining this group's identity. Difference in chronological arrival therefore resulted in power differentials and contrasting representations: while the estabished group had "the gratifying euphoria that goes with the consciousness of belonging to a group of higher value and with the complementary contempt for other groups" (Elias and Scotson 1994: XVIII), the group of later arrivals felt themselves to be inferior.

According to Elias and Scotson, far from being limited to this case study, the established-outsiders configuration is a universal pattern and social problems associated with this dynamic increasingly emerge in communities all over the globe as a consequence of human mobility. Again and again, motivated by economic inequality, war, government regulations and dreams of a better life, various groups are leaving their homes to settle "at the doorsteps of older groups or in their midst" (Elias and Scotson 1994: 22).

In Vale do Forno, as in Winston Parva, two unequal but interdependent groups which could be described as "established" and "outsiders" have emerged over time. Despite their low status in the wider social context, the older residents are more powerful than the newcomers by virtue of their prior arrival, as well as their status as national citizens and landlords. Due to their advantageous position, older families are better organized and more cohesive, and have formed closer relationships over time with the local authorities. In addition, because of their relative superiority in power terms, the established residents think of themselves as ethically better than the later arrivals.

This situation prompts the question as to whether tactics of resistance and reaction to the stigmatization and social exclusion exerted by older residents may emerge amongst the newcomers. In the case of Vale do Forno, do newcomers, as individuals and as a group, have a self-image which corresponds to the discourse articulated by the early settlers, in which foreign tenants are described as uptight, lazy and aggressive? This question is discussed below.

The multifaceted social configuration which emerged through time in Vale do Forno and surrounding areas has a parallel in the sphere of religion. Catholicism is undoubtedy the prevalent faith within the neighbourhood, especially amongst the Portuguese population[21]. The Catholic religion is especially visible in urban spaces, due to the images of saints placed at the entrances to houses, according to the Portuguese tradition. Moreover, a street procession dedicated to the Virgin Mary takes place every year in May. However, the increasing presence of a multinational migrant population has contributed to the gradual pluralisation of the religious landscape. Local Christianity itself is highly diversified. Beyond the *Capela do Divino Espirito Santo*, a Catholic chapel belonging to the Odivelas Parish, there are two other Christian places of worship in Vale do Forno. The first is the Portuguese branch of the Tokoist church, a prophetic movement which originated in Angola and is now widespread in many African and European countries (Blanes 2011) [22]. The Tokoist church was the first to be established in the suburb, in 2000. The congregation rented a small workshop in the higher lands, and subsequently moved to bigger and more visible premises at

[21] *Diagnostico Social da Vertente Sul* (Centro Paroquial de Famões 2008).

[22] Tokoism is a prophetic based movement which originated in Angola in the 1940s and later transnationalizedinto other African countries and Europe. The current official name of the movement is *Igreja do Nosso Senhor Jesus Cristo no Mundo.* The congregation settled in Vale do Forno is the first Tokoist church to be founded in Europe (Blanes 2011).

the entrance to the neighbourhood. This religious community is chiefly composed of Angolan believers, coming from all over the Lisbon region. The second church to settle in Vale do Forno was the Missão Evangélica Lusófona (MEL), which was established in 2002. This congregation belongs to the Portuguese branch of the Church of God, a Pentecostal transnational denomination (see chapter 4) and is composed of migrants of African origin, mostly Guineans, coming from neighbouring districts but also from more distant areas. It islocated on the ground-floor of a three-storey building on a side street. The most recent place of worship to have been established was the Catholic chapel. This was constructed by the local Catholic community, which is mainly made up of Portuguese people. The small, pleasant chapel was built on a patch of empty land, in front of the main square. Perhaps the desire to have a neighbourhood church emerged amongst the original settlers as a reaction to the emergence of the two other congregations, which were mainly composed of migrants.

Despite the presence of some migrants from Eastern European countries, there are no Christian orthodox places of worship in the area. Similarly, due to the absence of mosques, Muslim residents usually attend one of the four Islamic places of worship located in Odivelas district. In the nearby suburb of Serra da Luz a Sikh meeting house is located, mostly frequented by migrants of Indian origin[23]. On Sunday, the streets of Vale do Forno are full due to the influx of believers from other districts, who head towards their particular places of worship. Their bodies bedecked with traditional and colourful dress and sacred texts held in their hands, these individuals contribute to the diversity of the local landscape.

Occasionally, religious pluralism has been a source of conflict in the area. In August 1999, dozens of local residents attacked the Sikh centre in Serra da Luz. The crowd knocked down the door and damaged the equipment held inside with iron bars, sticks and hammers. This incident was the peak moment following several episodes of intolerance amongst different local groups which took place in Serra da Luz over the previous months. While Sikh believers, mainly Indian, complained about being continuously insulted by native inhabitants, the Portuguese residents complained about the supposed sexual harassment experienced by women living in the area. As the owner of a local café interviewed by a national newspaper

[23] The place of worship, which still exists, is the headquarters of the Portuguese Sikh community.

said, "The fact that there are too many ethnic groups here gets on our nerves. We are not used to it in this area."[24].

Over recent years, no similar episodes of violence have been reported. If religious intolerance continued to exist at a latent level, it did not emerge in the form of direct conflict. However, the mistrust and subtle contempt held by many Portuguese residents towards foreign inhabitants has numerous effects in the religious sphere. For instance, it hampers the missionary activities carried out by local African Christians amongst Portuguese inhabitants, as will be revealed in the following paragraphs. As a result, the population distribution of local religious organizations appears to reproduce the pre-existing social compartmentalization in the suburb, with Portuguese residents active in the Catholic community, African dwellers in MEL (or in Odivelas mosques in the case of Muslim worshippers), and Asian inhabitants in the Sikh centre.

At the same time, in the case of African Christians, religion is a key resource amongst the newcomers which enables them to react to the social exclusion exercised by the older residents and build a self-image free from stigma. In this sense, besides being an "objective expression of social status", religious belonging is a reflection of "symbolic and moral positionalities" in the Vale do Forno environment (Garbin 2013: 692). Indeed, religious faith enables MEL members to tell a "counter-story" (ibid: 678) about their presence in Vale do Forno which contrasts with the landlords' narratives and re-centres their marginality, enabling them to transform it into a discourse of redemption.

The mission at the margins

During weekly worship, Pastor Saline was commenting on the Bible passage known as "The valley of dry bones", in which the prophet Ezekiel receives the vision of a desert valley full of dry bones. Looking at this grisly image, Ezekiel hears the Lord's voice telling him to prophesy to the bones, saying that they will come to life, so they would know that He is the Lord (Ezek. 37:1-14). In the Pastor's view, these verses were referring to the duty of every single Christian to evangelize the society in which he/she lives.

[24] From the Público newspaper, 18 August 1999.

> Here it is interesting that the Prophet had the vision of the valley of dry bones. And it makes us think about the lives that are without Christ, the lives that do not think about the truth of God, about God, the lives that, from what we know from the Holy Bible, are walking towards condemnation, and are spiritually dead [...]. We have to pray for these lives, pray for this country, pray for this neighbourhood, so that God can also enable us to be worried and intercede in favour of these families.
>
> So when we share Ezekiel 37, as a Church of Christ we are like the Prophet at that time, we are those who choose to be used as instruments in the hands of God to prophesy to people who are spiritually dead, to people who do not know, or do not deal with, or do not want to know God, and we share with them that there is a difference, there is good news, there is a new hope. [...] He wants to send us, there is always someone with whom we can talk, and we can realize that we have something [to share]: love, hope, and peace.

Images of Europe as a valley of dry bones, or a "Christian cemetery" (Blanes 2008) are recurrent tropes among African Christians in the diaspora. Through these metaphors, African Christian believers depict themselves as carrying out a universal task: the evangelizing mission towards a European society that, in their view, has lost the Gospel way (Ter Haar 2008). Reflecting on these narratives, many authors have described the proliferation of African Churches in the diaspora as a form of "reversed mission", that is, the willingness to re-evangelise Europe by those who were formerly evangelized by European missionaries. This expression has been criticised for its Eurocentric perspective, as it implies the idea of a "standard" path of mission which could be "reversed" (Koning 2009). In this sense, the notion of reversed mission hints at movement from the periphery to the centre. However, as many scholars have pointed out, in recent times the centre of gravity of Christianity has shifted from the North to the South, with a rise in the number of conversions and the presence of Christians in public space in Africa and South America (Jenkins 2002; 2006).

Although the idea of "reversed mission" has been questioned, it highlights a central discourse actually circulating in many African-led churches: the idea that African Christians have the mission to re-evangelize European societies. Nonetheless, in spite of this widespread

rhetoric, several empirical studies on African Christianity in Europe reveal a gap between mission ideals and mission outcomes (Adogame 2000; Koning 2009). According to these accounts, mission discourse towards European natives does not correspond to active practice; at the same time, these churches have not been appealing to Europeans until now.

Trying to explore the reasons for the apparent gap between "reversed mission" discourse and praxis in this context, anthropologists have described two dynamics. Firstly, asymmetric power relations between African believers and the social environment where they live and operate create strong barriers to any missionary activity targeting the native population. Secondly, internal mechanisms within the congregations themselves are at play.

According to Danielle Koning (2009), African Christians are inhibited in their mission attempts toward Europeans due to their conviction that their "African-ness" or "blackness" decreases their authority as missionaries for white people. Further, in contrast with the "reversed mission" argument, the evangelizing practices of African-led churches are structured in term of specific languages, cultural features, social needs and social networks. The choice of a language of worship other than the idiom currently spoken in the host society can prevent communication with the wider society. Moreover, evangelization is often conducted within kinship networks, to the extent that mission efforts focus on life-cycle celebrations, such as baptisms and marriages, in which non-believer kin are invited to participate. In addition, the social services provided by African congregations are mostly directed to meet needs which are highly specific to a migrant population, such as material aid, legal counselling and the organization of transnational marriages and funerals (Koning 2009; see also Luca 2008 and Van Dijk 1997). Hence, despite universal mission ideals, mission practice remain limited to African migrants, who constitute the main target of actual evangelization.

Finally, Koning suggested that mission ideals perform less of an actual purpose but are instead a function of identity construction. Stressing the duty to re-evangelise Europe, these discourses depict African Christians as carriers of an authentic form of Christianity, by defining them in contrast to a secularized European world (Koning 2009). In other words, they are constructing African Christian identity by marking moral boundaries within the worldly environment.

Although this commentary casts some light on the case of the Missão Evangélica Lusófona, it only partially fits with the MEL experience. Similar to other African-led churches in the diaspora, MEL has not so far succeeded in its mission attempts with Europeans. Nonetheless, its national makeup is quite heterogeneous: besides a majority of Guinean churchgoers, it also comprises many worshippers from other African countries as well as from Brazil. In order to understand the ineffectiveness of MEL among Portuguese residents, and its success among migrants, it is useful to analyze its relationship with social actors in the local context as well as its mission strategy and its own internal social dynamics.

The evangelization project of MEL is primarily expressed in its name, as far as the concept of "lusophony" refers to an explicit missionary strategy. Despite the existence of linguistic pluralism within the congregation, which emerges in choirs, prayer and informal conversation, the official language of worship has been Portuguese from the outset. As noted by Ramon Sarró and Ruy Blanes, lusophony is not only a linguistic common ground for many of the populations living around the Atlantic Ocean, but also "a postcolonial outcome of centuries of political, cultural and economic cultural exchange, […] between Portugal, Brazil and African countries" (Sarró and Blanes 2009: 55). While the idea of lusophony appears to emphasizes the common background of both migrants and natives, and promote dialogue, the church does not, in fact, appear to be very appealing to Portuguese people. Although its mission statement is addressed to all of the residents in the area, few Portuguese have, in fact, joined the church. Therefore, up until now the missionary work has not succeeded in overcoming the social barriers which exist between older residents and newcomers. With the passing of time, MEL assumed the features of a "migrant church", formed by believers coming from various Portuguese-speaking countries, primarily Guinea-Bissau but also São Tomé and Príncipe, Angola, Cape Verde and Brazil. Hence, even if the MEL mission can be said to be operating in a lusophone space, then it is a lusophony without Portuguese people.

According to Saline, the absence of Portuguese members is less attributable to the narrow-mindedness of worshippers, or their aim to preserve a national or cultural identity, than to the distrust of Portuguese natives:

> Here we didn't start out with a ministry of Guineans for Guineans, but as a church open to lusophony and to all the people who want to open their hearts to the Gospel

> of Christ. We never meant to exclude any ethnic group. But maybe cultural identification became more important over time, so many Guineans started to take part in our ministry.

Therefore, the desire to bring the Gospel to the Portuguese appears to clash with the distrust felt by native inhabitants towards a community which is perceived as culturally and socially distinct: a group of "outsiders". Pastor Eliseu claims to know almost all the Guinean inhabitants of the neighbourhood, both Christians and Muslims, but to have no social relationship with native residents, for example. At the same time, mechanisms of identity production and reproduction appear to operate inside the MEL community. Many members, while living in distant neighbourhoods, describe having joined the congregation because of its "African warmth", in order to meet friends and fellow country-folk, and to praise God with African style choirs.

The current separatist trends appear to be driving the congregation towards what Mary Douglas has called an "enclave culture". In her work *In the Wilderness: The Doctrine of Defilement in the Book of Numbers* (Douglas 1993), she interprets the fourth book of the Bible by describing the historical context in which it was edited. As Douglas illustrated, formative Judaism developed under Babylonian and Persian foreign rule as a colonial dependency, taking the form of an enclave. An enclave, in Douglas' view, is a social and cultural pattern associated with a weakly articulated social structure, distinctive of a dissenting minority which establishes strong boundaries in relation to the wider community, yet remaining internally egalitarian. As a general rule, within enclavist or sectarian communities the condition of the minority group brings an initial disadvantage to members, who are continuously tempted away from their loyalty to the group. Due to the weakness of authority, no coercion could be exerted to hold or punish deserters; the only form of control being moral persuasion. Accordingly, three standard solutions to deal with defections are carried out: an emphasis on the worthiness of the individual choice to belong the group; adopting equality as a fundamental value; erecting "a wall of virtue" between themselves and the outside world, fostering sectarian solidarity through the detraction of outsiders and conspiracy theories. When these strategies fail secession can occur, resulting in sister communities being established which are similar to the original group.

As Douglas argued, when the Numbers were edited - between the Babylonian exile (sixth century BC), and the Second Temple period (fifth century BC), when Judah was a fiefdom of Persia - the people of Judah veered towards an enclave. At that time the people of Israel who had been in exile had just returned to Canaan land and had established themselves among a population of various origins who had settled there in their absence. In this context of conflict, the Jewish rulers were interested in emphasising the uniqueness of the Jewish religion and its distinctiveness in relation to the surrounding region. The priests, however, did not support a separatist policy. In fact, the priestly doctrine of purity and defilement enunciated in the book of Numbers did not distinguish foreigners and natives. On the contrary, it established a sharp line between purity, associated with the presence of the living God, and defilement, related to a set of bodily conditions and transgressive human actions, including idolatry and magical practices, which automatically resulted in disasters. However, in the political context of the Second Temple, the separatist government party won, retained power and controlled biblical interpretations, while the priestly party lost power. Hence, although the Biblical purity code conveyed a message of universality, Judaism developed over time as a paradigmatic enclave culture. This provided Judaism with a special source of resilience, enabling it to confront the trauma of diaspora and to adapt to a range of oppressive situations.

Do these conclusions shed light on the MEL case? In some ways, the Missão Evangélica Lusófona can be described as a kind of enclave. The core members of its community come from a country, Guinea-Bissau, where Evangelical Christianity is a minority religion. Following migratory flows, this dissenting community reproduced itself on the outskirts of Lisbon. Here, it gave birth to a congregation in which Portuguese believers are not included. As an enclave culture, one would expect it to be subjected to the vicious circle of separation and resentment as part of its distinctive identity and social reproduction. Accordingly, it would regard the wider community as impious and impure, thereby strengthening the sense of holiness of its own members. As a result, it would continuously reproduce the conditions of its separateness from the outside world.

However, this is not the whole story. As revealed by the episode described at the beginning of this chapter, contact between MEL members and the Portuguese inhabitants of Vale do Forno are not limited to casual encounters: evangelization campaigns as well as

missionary visits are regularly conducted in the neighbourhood. In fact, members of the MEL mission group bring food and clothes collected in church to neighbours in need, using this opportunity to preach the Gospel. Although these visits are mostly made to migrant families, members of the MEL congregation have been known to turn up at Portuguese homes if required. Furthermore, the choice of Portuguese as the official language of the church reveals, in my opinion, a sincere desire to overcome cultural and social barriers. While mission efforts have not achieved satisfactory results among Portuguese landlords due to reciprocal mistrust, they have proven to be quite effective in the case of Portuguese-speaking migrant tenants.

A number of strategies have led to the incorporation of members from various lusophone countries over time. I described some of these tactics earlier, such as the cultural events organized by ACL, the evangelistic campaigns in the area, and the mission visits to needy neighbours. Here, I would like to explore a strategy of expansion which has received insufficient attention in recent scholarship on African Churches in Europe. Many authors have associated the "ethnic" or cultural uniformity of many African congregations to the obvious fact that evangelization runs along kinship networks. For instance, as places of worship are open to non-believers mostly at life-cycle celebrations, such as baptisms and marriages, opportunities for interaction with non-Christians are restricted to kin and fellow citizens. However, kinship ties may turn into powerful tools for cultural cross-over, and a means of overcoming social and cultural boundaries. I understood the importance of family bonds as a means of evangelizing one day when, during worship, a church leader approached me, laid her hands upon me and began to pray. She asked God to turn me into a vessel, a spiritual receptacle able to bring other members of my family to the church. Later, she explained to me that any new convert is seen as a seed, or an envoy of God into her or his family.

For this reason, intermarriage between members of different nationalities are highly encouraged, as they are seen as a means of expanding evangelization beyond the boundaries of the Guinean community. Significantly, all the marriages celebrated during my fieldwork were between people of distinct countries of origin, such as the wedding between Eliseu and Elza. If the value assigned to intermarriage can be connected with the universalist Christian ideology, it can also be associated to long-standing kinship practices, which are quite common among many ethnic groups in Guinea-Bissau (see chapter 2) Indeed, the Guinean social landscape has historically been marked by a high degree of pluralism. Here, multi-

ethnic communities emerged over time, as well as hybrid social formations, including the Creole society. Here, also, differences were accommodated by creating social connections, mostly through religious and kinship bonds, as in the case of the landlord-stranger interaction, which served as a means to incorporate outsiders into existing communities. The latter was a system of reciprocity that emerged in the context of long-distance trade networks and was reproduced in the interaction with Portuguese seafarers. While they were subjected to various restrictions, foreigners were provided with food and lodging and were allowed to marry local women. As many authors have pointed out, these patterns of reciprocity and hospitality between firstcomers and latecomers continue to mark the interactions between different groups and individuals in Guinea-Bissau. Similarly, in all likelihood Guinean migrants expect to to find a similar treatment when travelling away from home. In Lisbon, for instance, they find themselves playing the same role that was performed by Portuguese seamen many centuries ago: like Portuguese traders living on the Upper Guinean Coast, they are *lançados* (thrown) into a foreign land. However, their expectations are largely unfulfilled: instead of hospitality and incorporation they mostly found segregation from the surrounding society.

Although the expectation of the newcomers from Guinea-Bissau to be incorporated into the firstcomers' networks are mostly discontented, the Guinean ability to accommodate difference and create social connections is directed to strangers hailing from other countries. Indeed, a pluralistic environment seems to have been reproduced in MEL, where multiple identities are bound together by the common faith in Christ. In this sense, universalist Christian discourses and West African kinship patterns have merged to domesticate and incorporate differences within a pluralistic migrant community.

In this context, mission discourses enable MEL's members to manage collective and individual identities. They ideally connect the church to the universal Community in Christ, which is involved in a global effort to spread the Gospel. In particular, they position the congregation in the lusophone scene, a world that thanks to Brazil is performing an increasingly influential role in the economic, cultural and religious global landscape. Many authors have stressed the role of Brazilian churches in the global spread of Evangelical Christianity, especially in the African continent, leading to a form of "south-to-south" evangelization (Sarró and Blanes 2009; Van de Kamp 2011). Hence, besides expressing a

wish to evangelize Portuguese people, the idea of lusophony also connects the church to the dynamic, growing and powerful world of lusophone Christianity.

At the same time, mission discourses provide MEL's members with important resources to build individual identities. The idea that the believers were brought away from their country by divine providence in order to evangelize a spiritually dead people, enhances their self-confidence and moral authority. As stated during a sermon by Eusébio, one of the church elders,

> We are like José, who was sold as a slave and brought to Egypt[25] […], who was a migrant like us but was able to retain his vision. […] We came from Guinea, Angola and Sao Tomé in order to participate in the kingdom of God. We are here to develop God's vision which is inside us. […] Society is waiting for us. The objective of our vision is to bring others to Christ. We can all participate in the mission of spreading the Gospel. […] God wants to use you; in one way or another you will be a missionary of God, you have been put here for this.

Indeed, the Bible provides migrant believers with a large repertoire of mobility narratives, enabling them to make sense of their condition. For instance, as Thomas Tweed (2006) observed in the case of Catholic Cubans in the USA, the notion of "exile" is a recurring biblical trope used to name migrants' crossing by plane, ship, and even raft. Together with the spiritual strengthening and the corporeal renewal obtained through a set of techniques of the self (including regimes of praying, fasting, and healing, as well as speaking in tongues), the discourses that turn migrants into missionaries have a strong empowering effect on the individual. Indeed, as Rijk Van Dijk highighted, Evangelical membership provides migrant believers – who are often in want of legal and social citizenship - with a spiritual citizenship within a global community "to which anybody, once having gained admission, can become 'internal' even after travelling intercontinental distances" (Van Dijk 1997: 156).

As many authors have pointed out, cities are multidimensional and constituted by different groups, exhibit manifold spatial practices (Low 1996), various moral geographies (Smith 2000) and multiple meanings (Knibbe 2009). The urban space in which MEL believers

[25] He is referring to the biblical episode of Joseph sold by his brothers (Gen. 37:55).

move is produced by the mapping of various actors. According to the early settlers in the area, Vale do Forno is a place which they have literally created over time, and which they have to defend against a two-pronged threat from outsiders who are supposedly colonising it, and local authorities who are trying to "legalise" it. It is a land in which they have invested much of their time and money, as well as providing the backdrop to their family stories.

From the perspective of local institutions, this neighbourhood is a place which must be governed, controlled and subjected to urban regulations, as well as made safe and provided with basic infrastructure. In the view of local officials, inhabitants are institutional partners and the territory is imagined under the guise of an urban renewal plan.

In the view of MEL believers, another vision of "regeneration" is at work. In contrast with other local actors, African believers express a rhetoric of "moral renewal" (Garbin 2013: 684), and represent the Vale do Forno suburb as a land which should be won back for Jesus. Within this "spiritual mapping" (Fancello and Mary 2010) of the suburb, MEL's place of worship becomes a crucial point of reference, in spite of its relative invisibility on the Lisbon landscape. By transforming a former warehouse into a church, MEL has converted the urban space (Garbin 2013: 693), in coherence with the totalizing project of conversion described by Ruth Marshall (2009) in the Nigerian Pentecostal context. To use the words of Foucault, MEL worship place takes the form of a heterotopy. Similar to a heterotopy, it is a real place which constitutes a kind of counter-space, "a kind of effectively realized utopia" in which the surrounding area is simultaneously represented, contested and overturned (Foucault 1998: 310). A place where "visions for alternative social spaces can condense" (Bochow and van Dijk 2012: 329). A place that has been cleared of the influence of Catholic "idols", and where images of saints are substituted with African choirs. A sacred space where people may enter as a migrant and exit as a missionary.

The efforts of the MEL leadership to obtain a space to build a church in Vale do Forno reflect the importance of the local dimension in their work. This endeavour has taken on both a political and a spiritual dimension, involving negotiations with local institutions as well as ritual activities such as those described at the beginning of the chapter. On the one hand, the ownership of a place of worship could transform the congregation from tenant to landlord, possibly leading to a recalibration of the local balance of power; on the other, the identification of a space in the neighbourhood (and not elsewhere) reflects the eagerness of

the leadership to "invest locally". Indeed, as observed by Marten van der Meulen, "building a house of worship is a particularly local thing to do", since a local congregation, while it can be a hub in larger transnational networks, will draw its public from the area in which is settled (van der Meulen 2009: 176).

On the basis of this description, Vale do Forno emerges as a multifaceted space, where different maps intersect and interact, money and social resources are mobilised, and meanings are produced and continuously negotiated. In this context, MEL plays a central role in enabling migrant dwellers to produce a sense of place. As observed by Ramon Sarró, "religion is simultaneously a way to remove our existential earthly life and place it in a spiritual context and a way to root the spiritual domain into concrete sites" (Sarró 2013: 386).

A concluding reflection on MEL's religious spatiality in Vale do Forno concerns the issue of marginality. As remarked by João de Pina Cabral, the binary opposed centre/margin is a spatial metaphor used to describe the power inscribed in socio-cultural life. According to this perspective, marginality is the condition of people, objects, practices and meanings that are less legitimate than others in the eyes of the hegemonic power. However, in the symbolic sphere the domination exercised by the hegemonic power is never complete: instead, it always produces some forms of resistance. In this sense, as the author noted, marginality and centrality are always relative, and socio-cultural life is a field of negotiation of meaning (Pina Cabral 2000).

If marginality is a lack of social and symbolic power, MEL's members are marginal in various ways. In Guinea-Bissau, where many believers come from, Christianity constitutes a religious minority in relation to a majority which practices Islam or follows local religions. Similarly in Vale do Forno, and generally in Portugal, Evangelical Christianity forms a religious minority which stands in opposition to Catholicism. Furthermore, many members live in a suburb which is considered as marginal both by local government and amongst the general population because of its illegal origin, geographical location and social composition. In addition, as newcomers they represent an even more marginal group. In the eyes of the established Portuguese inhabitants they are outsiders, and thus implicitly "inferior in human terms" (Elias and Scotson 1994). As a matter of fact, many African Christians complain about the racist attitude of Portuguese inhabitants. As illustrated in the previous paragraphs, racism is an outcome of the power asymmetry between Portuguese home-owner landlords and

migrant tenants in the local environment, where both social and racial boundaries between natives and incomers are constantly maintained. Thus, the marginal position of MEL members makes the church particularly lacking in appeal to the established Portuguese population.

The image conveyed in sermons such as those mentioned earlier, can be related to a discourse that Ramon Sarró and Anne Mélice called the "theology of marginality", with reference to Kimbanguist believers in Lisbon (Sarró and Mélice 2010). Kimbanguist pastors, similar to MEL leaders, often refer to the marginal situation of Nazareth as opposed to the centrality of Rome in the Roman Empire, to emphasise how salvation may come from the periphery. They also prophesy in a similar vein, that the Christian regeneration of Europe will come from marginal locations, such as the outskirts of European cities. Lisbon is the capital of a country which is generally considered as marginal in relation to European centres of power, both due to its geographical location and its weak economy. Furthermore, the redemption of Europe will come from underprivileged African migrants, and the first to receive it will be the marginal citizens of the suburbs:

> As anthropologists know since the days of Victor Turner and Mary Douglas, margins have also a strong potential of renewal and regeneration, a potential Kimbanguists use in their discourse and in their practice in order to conceptualize their agency in the world and to place themselves at the centre of a new understanding of history and geography (Sarró and Mélice 2010).

By using an image of inversion which is one of the crucial narratives of the New Testament, MEL believers are telling a counter-story of regeneration in opposition to more accredited cosmo-visions emerging from the surrounding society. Rather than surrender to the stigma which is an outcome of their social positioning, through their evangelical worldview MEL believers transform their marginal condition into a discourse of salvation.

Chapter 7

Second Coming, Successful life and the Sweetness of Guinea: Evangelical Thoughts about the Future*

I have a dream today.
I have a dream that one day
every valley shall be exalted,
every hill and mountain shall be made low.
The rough places will be made plain,
and the crooked places will be made straight.
And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
and all flesh shall see it together.
This is our hope.
[Martin Luther King, Jr.]

"Para que o teu filho viva amanha, num mundo dos teus sonhos"
[Amílcar Cabral]

The sixth chapter was dedicated to the topic of space. After a review of the recent anthropological literature on space and place, I took the case of MEL as an example of the way in which an African church operate, as a religious and social agent, in a suburb of a European city. Then, I used the tropes of "map" and "mapping" to describe the complex ways in which MEL and its members are producing specific spiritual geographies, which interact with other conflicting maps coexisting in the same territory. Finally, on the basis of this analysis, I explored how religious practices and beliefs are enabling MEL's members to inhabit the place in which they chose to live, and to make sense of their migrant condition.

*This chapter was inspired by the contribution given by Ramon Sarró to the Seminar of Anthropology of the Institute of Social Sciences (University of Lisbon), presented in December 2011 and entitled "One or two things that I know about the future".

The seventh, and last, chapter is centred on the issue of time. In particular, while the previous ones are concerned with the past and the present of my interlocutors, this chapter looks into their future. In the following pages, I will explore the peculiar ways in which Evangelical Guinean believers - both in the homeland and in the diaspora - are engaged in imagining, thinking and producing their future. Firstly, I will focus on the Evangelical minority in Guinea-Bissau, arguing that the particular and manifold vision of time of Evangelical Guineans results from the intersection of particular historical and cultural circumstances on the one hand, and from peculiar ideas about the future and hope whose origin can be traced back to the Christian tradition on the other. Secondly, I will analyse the representations of the future of Evangelical Guinean migrants, emphasising the tension between private and collective dimension of the future in their life projects.

New Year's Eve

I arrived in Bissau on 31 December 2012. On 12 April, a coup d'état - the third in the post-colonial history of Guinea-Bissau - had overturned the democratically elected government, and installed a provisional administration. On 1 January 2013, on the national television Pastor Júlio Joaquim, president of the Aliança Evangélica da Guiné-Bissau[1], was giving a New Year's message to the nation. He was wishing everyone a good 2013, but his face was serious and his voice had a severe tone. He spoke about the current situation in the country, marked by political instability and economic hardship. According to him, Guinean people should not trust politicians or any other people. Indeed, he proclaimed that only in God is hope, and none but the Lord can bring prosperity and peace to Guinea-Bissau. Pastor Joaquim ended his speech expressively with a reading of Psalm 33: "The Lord foils the plans of nations; he thwarts the purposes of the people. But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of His heart persist through all generations […]. No king is saved by the size of his army; no warrior escapes through his great strength […]. We wait in hope for the Lord; He is our help and our shield".

I was impressed by the fact that the editorial staff had allowed a representative of a religious minority to make this important televised message. However, as I learned later, national TV frequently invites representatives of the three main religions (Islam, Catholicism

[1] Evangelical Alliance of Guinea-Bissau (see chapter 1).

and Protestantism) to contribute to their programmes, and Evangelicals are the most receptive to media requests.

I spent New Year's Eve in the congregation led by my friend Pastor Felix Da Costa, at a branch of the Ministério de Amor pela Fé Internacional[2] (MAFI), a national Pentecostal denomination. The New Year worship began in the dark - as usual there was no electricity at night. Down the hall, a plexiglass pulpit was lit by a weak bulb, creating quite a charming effect. For the special occasion, the choir was led by Buba, a young paraplegic singer who is well known in Evangelical circles. Buba was born into a Fula family of Muslim faith, but he was abandoned by his parents at an early age because of his disability and ended up begging for alms in the street. He later found shelter into a small orphanage run by MAFI church, where he accepted Jesus Christ and began to sing as a soloist on the Christian circuit[3]. The concert started unplugged. Then, almost miraculously, the light appeared, and someone ran to crank up the amplifiers.

After a long alternation between music and testimonies, finally Pastor Felix reached the pulpit and took the floor. His message focused on the subject of time. "Whereas God is out of time", he said, "we are controlled by time. But this is also a time that God gave us to be blessed and used by Him, a time that does not belong to us. This year, 2013, is one more time that God has given us to be blessed, to be used by Him".

At the very beginning of 2013, time was one of the most recurrent themes in sermons and everyday conversations, together with the closely related topic of *vison* (vision). The following Sunday I attended the service at the MEL's mission, located in Plack II suburb, northwest of the city centre. Pastor Silvério Quiletch, a young minister ordained by Pastor Eliseu in 2010, focused his preaching on the subject of *vison*:

> We are at the beginning of one more year […]. Everyone here, none of us should be side-tracked by the things of this world that lead us to do evil, and that distract us from our vision (*vison*) […]. In John 18:37 we see our master Jesus Christ […] After he was arrested and taken to Pilate, he was asked by Pilate: "So you are a king?" Then Jesus answered: "You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the

[2] Ministry of Love for the International Faith.
[3] His CDs circulated within the Guinean diaspora in Portugal. I also had one, which I bought during a service at MEL church.

world is to testify to the truth". Jesus explained to Pilate that this was the vision he went on to realize for this world, to provide real testimony so that the world could know the truth […]. Every single person who is here has a vision, which is different from that of others. This is to say that we should be prepared, we should be vigilant about always being righteous, not to get swayed, not to walk to the right or the left, but to keep on the straight and narrow. This is what Jesus wants, for this is what Jesus did. What are the things that make us deviate from our position? What makes us stop, or give up? Why? We are at the threshold of a new year, going forward to continue fighting, striving to achieve our vision. But the question must be asked: What is your vision? I want to be the best, but to be the best depends on God, on what God wants for you. I want to be the most exemplary student in my class, or in the entire school. You can. If you want to be a great football player like Messi or Cristiano Ronaldo, you can. In your job, you aim to be a good employee, so that your boss will like you. Or you want to be a politician, the best politician in Guinea, or wherever it may be in the world, it is also possible. In your marriage, everyone praising you, this can also be what you aim for. And also in your love story, what is your vision? Because there is always a vision. Because God or Jesus have a great vision, but what we humans lack, is to be prepared […]. We have to keep track of our vision. The vision lasts forever, it does not waver. We have to always to prepared, to work, we must be committed to our jobs, to our bosses. For example Messi and Ronaldo, they do not get lazy, they always train […].

What do I want to do to fulfil in my vision this year? We have to be careful not to be distracted from our vision this year. Like when Jesus was preaching to a crowd, then his disciples came to him saying that his mother and brothers wanted to talk to him. And Jesus replied: "Who is my mother? Who are my brothers? My mother and brothers are those who hear God's word and put it into practice" (Luke 8:19-21). The disciples wanted to divert his vision, but he did not stop what he had begun […].

Let's hear five types of distraction that a believer should avoid... First, we should avoid any distraction that comes from people. In the same verse we were listening to, the family came to distract Jesus. Distract him from what? From the church… The people of the world do not have ears like you, children of God, have.

> Avoid those types of distractions… Those who do not know God, they do not have the principle of God's vision which we, who are believers, have. Second, avoid the distraction of those who want to compete with you: distraction from competition […]. Third, we must avoid faked brothers [...]. Avoid the distraction of false people, it is the enemy who sends them. They come just to distract you, to divert you from your vision, from your target, from your focus. Fourth, avoid carnal leaders, perhaps like me, and brothers who have no commitment to God […]. The enemy wins through that man, that leader, that carnal prophet, who is not as committed as the person who pledged his life, who spoiled his life, who eradicated his own life. My brothers, I'll tell you one thing: these spirits of the dead, I do not want to scare you, but they always come into your mind to bother you, but do not accept this […]. Last distraction: avoid distraction from arguments that end in nothing […]. Avoid distractions from unproductive arguments, which do not result in anything for your life […].
>
> This year, 2013, you have to be alert. I'll be a true believer, I'll be a believer who will do great things […]. The devil tried to distract Jesus Christ in a number of ways, but Jesus had his vision, he died on the cross for our sins. You are at the beginning of 2013, now the devil will try to distract you, but you will win. You will win in the name of Jesus. You have your vision. From now on, you will win […]. It has to be clear that you are children of God, and you do not accept distractions.

After the service, Pastor Quiletch clarified the evangelical concept of vision to me. In his opinion, he said, "Vision cannot be seen by the naked eye, it's about what you want to achieve in your life. I want these people here to know the truth of Jesus Christ, so that they do something for this church, and especially for this nation". First of all, as Quiletch stressed in his sermon, every single person has a plan for his or her life, everyone has a special dream: one person wants to excel in his or her studies, another wants to have good conjugal relations, another wants to be a great politician or football player, and so on. What distinguishes Christians from the "people of the world" (*djinti di mundu*) is that they know that God has a plan for them. However, the horizon of vision is not necessarily limited to one's personal life: one can have a vision about his or her church, his or her nation.

I will return to this topic later in this chapter. For the moment, it is sufficient to note that *vison* has to do with individual and collective aspirations, with dreams of a better life,

with hopes and drives related to the future. All of these issues are the focus of a recent trend in anthropology, which is concerned with studying the multiple and varying ways in which people engage in imagining, thinking and producing their future.

For an anthropology of the future

In recent years, we have seen a boom in the anthropology of future, hope and aspirations, suggesting the emergence of a new paradigm. Probably the most comprehensive work on this subject is *The Future as Cultural Fact*, by Arjun Appadurai (2013). In this book, the author of *Modernity at Large* (1996) presented a broad analysis of the forms that globalization has taken over the last twenty years. At the same time, in a thematic departure from his long-standing fieldwork among urban slum dwellers in Mumbai, he presented a manifesto for an anthropology of the future.

According to Appadurai, the emerging diacritic of this age of intense globalization is "the domination of techniques and mentalities oriented to manipulating or withstanding risk" (Appadurai 2013:3). These risk-based orientations and practices include many different phenomena, ranging from financial speculation to various forms of gambling and astrological practice. The event that clearly brought to light this trend was the great financial collapse of 2007-2010, which showed how the risk-takers who control the markets are linked through an unprecedented multiplicity of threads to the bearers and victims of risk-based strategies all over the world. In fact, contemporary financial capitalism has risk at its very heart, as the techniques of measuring and forecasting risk are among its central working principles. On the one hand, as recent works on emergent neoliberal forms of capitalism have noticed, we are witnessing the rise of a "new economy of catastrophe", including a range of speculation practices profiting from disaster, insecurity, and emergency (Klein 2007; Lewis 2007) . On the other hand, gambling on the expected collapse of national economies, financial markets and rating agencies are turning into crisis-creating machines, in a dreadful vicious circle (Appadurai 2013).

As recent financial crises have shown, these risk-taking strategies have disruptive effects on the everyday lives of people all over the world. Nonetheless, these capitalist sciences of speculation interact with daily strategies and practices of future-making, including vernacular understanding of uncertainty, risk, and forecasting as practices of everyday life in

all societies. Indeed, according to Appadurai, what is relevant in this age of late capitalism is a tension between the "ethics of possibility" and the "ethics of probability". By ethics of probability Appadurai meant the managerial ethos that emerges from the statistical representation of uncertainty, and deems profit a reward for facing risk. In contrast, what he called ethics of possibility include ways of thinking, feeling, and acting that encourage the work of hope, imagination and aspiration. While the former is tied to the growth of amoral forms of global capital, the latter is linked to transnational civil society movements and progressive democratic organizations.

If risk-taking and risk-bearing, understood as ways of dealing with an uncertain future, are the dominant trends of the last twenty years, according to Appadurai anthropology has not paid enough attention to these momentous changes. So far, an enduring concern with persistence, stability, and fixity has limited anthropological interest in how different societies imagine the future. The intellectual framework of the discipline remains "substantially shaped by the lens of pastness" (Appadurai 2013:285), as anthropology continues to be preoccupied with the logics of reproduction, durability, custom, memory and tradition. Anthropology has therefore largely neglected the many ways in which human groups have shaped and anticipated the future, leaving the task of a systematic analysis of future-making to other disciplines, such as economics, environmental sciences, design, architecture and planning.

In order to overcome this inertia and undertake the shaping of an anthropology of the future, Appadurai began by examining three human preoccupations that shape the future as a cultural fact (that is, in its variable forms): imagination, aspiration, and anticipation. According to the author, anthropologists frequently restricted the field of imagination to what Victor Turned called "liminal" moments. That is to say, special ritual occasions in the lives of people found in small-scale societies. Usually, these ritual moments - interpreted as part of the processes of social reproduction - have been the privileged site where anthropologists have analyzed the work of imagination through dreams, fantasies, and extraordinary surges of creativity. By contrast, according to Appadurai, if we extend the analysis of imagination to everyday life, we discover that the ordinary person is constantly producing maps and shaping new futures.

Appadurai defined the "capacity to aspire" as a social and collective "navigational capacity, through which poor people can effectively change the "terms of recognition" within

which they are generally trapped" (Appadurai 2013:290). Furthermore, it is a cultural capacity: although universally distributed, it takes shape in widely different ways, manifesting itself in local systems of value, meaning, and dissent. Central to the idea of aspiration are the various ways in which different groups of people, relative to their society, think what a good life is. In other words, what people hope to achieve under the circumstances of having an unsatisfactory present. Examining cultures through the logic of reproduction supports the idea that social groups are generally satisfied with the state of affairs in which they find themselves. On the contrary, in Appadurai's opinion a broader understanding of cultural systems should also take into consideration the politics of hope through which any society or group can imagine a change in their lives. In this sense, "hope is the political counterpart to the work of imagination" (Appadurai 2013:293).

Finally, while many recent studies have shown how neo-liberal elites are committed to using new financial tools to perform risk management and earn a profit from this, not enough attention has been given to the multiple local understandings of uncertainty, risk, and forecasting, as well as to the varying concepts of a fulfilling life. A large percentage of the world's population are living under conditions of extreme uncertainty rather than likelihood, especially in terms of future happiness. For them, "the future is a trauma inflicted on the present by the arrival of crises of every description. Consequently, hope is often threatened by nausea, fear, and anger for many subaltern populations" (Appadurai 2013:299). Nevertheless, ordinary human beings are constantly being asked to use up their energies, resources, ideas, and bodies in order to pursue their aspirations, contributing to the "design of social forms" (Appadurai 2013).

Among the recent proliferation of studies concerning the manifold visions of the future and strategies of future-making, another crucial contribution is Jane Guyer's article "Prophecy and the Near Future: Thoughts on macroeconomic, evangelical, and punctuated time" (2007). In this work, Guyer attempted to delineate an ethnography of the "near future" of the 21st century. Guyer understood the near future to be a temporal frame consisting of a set of practices and representations aimed towards active engagement in the social world, including "the reach of thought and imagination, of planning and hoping, of tracing out mutual influences, of engaging in struggle for specific goals" (Guyer 2007:409). Her point was that in the current post-Cold War period, the public culture of temporality in the United States is

marked by a shift from a focus on the near future to an "evacuation" of it. In other words, the public temporal perspective is marked by two distinct opposites: concentration on the extreme long-term, and fixation on the immediate present, whereas the near future retreats in the private sphere. Moreover, the perception of time is punctuated rather than continual, in contrast with the idea of a homogeneous time which has persisted from the beginnings of Western modernity to the post-war era. Within this framework, the date conceived as an event acquires dominance: whereas in the previous temporal frame the date was conceived as a position in a sequence, now the date is held as an independent unity, each qualitatively different from the other. Examples of this "date-as-event configuration" include the dated schedules of debt and dates that inaugurate the inclusion of nations in key agreements. Therefore, the gap between an instantaneous present and a distant future is filled with privatization of the near future dimension on the one side and punctuated time on the other.

A paradigmatic case of this configuration is the evangelical concept of "prophetic time" (Robbins 2004:159). As many authors have commented, belief in a dominant temporal frame marked by the expectation of the End of Time has spread amongst many branches of Evangelical Christianity in the United States since the 1970s (Harding 2001; Robbins 2004). According to this dispensationalist[4] view, we are living in the interim between the first and second comings of the Messiah. This conviction entails the existential condition of living in "the time that remains" (Agamben 2000), while waiting for the Second Coming and anticipating signs for it, with an enduring attitude of "expectant waiting": "the idea of a gap, a space, a rupture in time […] endured by waiting, by identifying, by witnessing is the basic evangelical approach to time in the near future" (Guyer 2007:415). Within this doctrine, the universal accomplishment of salvation in a millennial and undetermined future becomes the ultimate value. Accordingly, as the vision of the common good is projected into the distant future, this perspective results in a privatization of the near future.

From a theoretical perspective, in his article "Reflections on Hope as a Category of Social and Psychological Analysis", Vincent Crapanzano (2003) reflected on the notion of hope as a category of experience and analysis. By reviewing a number of authors who have dealt with the theme of hope in the domains of philosophy, theology and anthropology,

[4] The concept of dispensations referred to is a series of chronologically successive divisions of Biblical history. Many Christian writers, such as Irenaeus, Augustine and Joachim of Fiore have offered their own dispensation arrangements, and Dispensationalism is common within Protestant tradition. The number of dispensations varies from three, to four, to seven or eight, depending on the author.

Crapanzano debated whether it is possible to use the concept of hope in ethnographic description as an operative anthropological category, independent from vernacular meanings. The author begins by stressing the close relation between hope and desire. Although hope can be used as an equivalent to desire, it is generally conceived as "its passive counterpart" (Crapanzano 2003:6). While desire presupposes human agency and is commonly considered to be effective, hope relies on a transcendent agent - such as God, fate or chance - for its accomplishment and exceeds human capacities. Thus, while desire generally falls within the realm of psychology, hope and falls within metaphysics. Nonetheless, both require an ethics of expectation, which is founded on a specific notion of the real.

Hope, Crapanzano continued, is a fundamental idea in Christian theology, wherein it is acknowledged as a principal virtue, along with faith and charity. In reality, it is deeply rooted in the linear, teleological, and eschatological temporality that has dominated Western thought for a long time, and still affects our concept of time. For this reason, hope has usually been a concern of theologians and philosophers. Unlike desire, with a few exceptions, it has rarely been mentioned in the social or psychological sciences.

While many scholars, such as the theologian Jürgen Moltmann (1967; 1970) and the philosopher Ernst Bloch (1986) stressed the optimistic and motivating side of hope, Crapanzano pointed towards its ambivalent dimension. Besides being a driving force leading to action and change, it also has a passive side, which can lead to paralysis: "one may argue that there is simply nothing to be done but hope and that any activism is delusional" (Crapanzano 2003:18). The author supported his argument with reference to his fieldwork among white South Africans in the final years of Apartheid (Crapanzano 1986). Under the historical circumstances in which they found themselves, white people were trapped in a waiting disposition. Of course they wanted to preserve their wealth and their previous status, but they also knew that this was unlikely so they experienced indefinite hope which they could not turn into effective desire. Their world was one of unattainable desires and waking dreams. For them, hope was "the field of desire in waiting" (Crapanzano 1986:45). In this sense, as Kierkegaard warned us, hope can be "an untrustworthy shipmaster" (Crapanzano 2003:19)insofar it may be associated with illusion, self-deception and false conscience.

Having explored the ambivalent aspects of the concept of hope, Crapanzano returned to the main question: is hope a universal structure, independent from cultural determination

and apt to be used as an operative category in ethnographic description? Or, rather, is it a merely emic notion, whose meaning is inseparable from its Christian roots? Drawing from a multidisciplinary literature, ranging from Jürgen Moltmann (1967; 1970) to Eugène Minkowski (1970), Benjamin Lee Whorf (1956), Ernst Bloch (1986), and Kenelm Burridge (2014), as well as from his ethnographies among American Evangelicals (Crapanzano 2001) and white South Africans (Crapanzano 1986), the author portrayed hope as a concept embedded within linguistic, cultural, historical, and socially specific understandings, leaving, I believe, his original question open-ended. Finally, while stressing the social – and thus historically and culturally determined - component of hope, he also highlighted its dialogical and political dimension: "Though we place them insistently in the individual, neither desire nor hope can be removed from social engagement and implication. We are all, I suppose, caught" (Crapanzano 2003:25).

Making the future in Africa

A number of recent works adopted a similar orientation towards the study of future-making, focusing on African contexts. In a collective book entitled *Producing African Futures* edited by Brad Weiss (2004b), the authors explored the ways in which the future is produced in radically uncertain settings. According to Weiss, if we examine the hallmarks of the current neo-liberal time in Africa, we find that old and new trends co-exist. In the latter half of the twentieth century unprecedented changes in African countries occurred in the wake of neo-liberal reforms, which led to historically specific formations. Yet, in spite of new, these configurations are firmly rooted in long-term processes and enduring structures of inequality and exploitation. Consequently, the analysis of the distinguishing features of "Second Age of Capital" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2000) in Africa necessitates a reflection on the nature of African modernity, as well as a comparison with its colonial and post-colonial past. In the twentieth century, as Weiss observed, the encounter between European and African socio-cultural forms produced specific, heterogeneous, and hybrid formulations of modernity, marked by the juxtaposition of disparate world views and practices that defied European categories. At the same time, as noted by Jean and John Comaroff, modernity was a global but asymmetrical historical production, and "colonialism was as integral as Western rationalism to the making of modernity" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2004:332).

To the extent that Africans have experienced modernity as an imperial project, African modernity has always been marked by deep contradictions and tensions: between accumulation and redistribution; between individuation and collective belonging; between personal achievement and social obligation. As then and now, this unstable balance of promise and privation has been established through seduction, as well as through coercion. And yet, this albeit precarious balance that took shape throughout the colonial and post-colonial age in Africa is about to unravel under the force of neo-liberal reform. Indeed, a number of factors connected to neo-global processes have contributed to the emergence of an expanding sense of crisis in contemporary Africa. Among these factors the declining sovereignty of governments, the contraction of the public sector, the flourishing of unregulated markets and the polarization of wealth and poverty, along with the widespread outbreak of crime and armed conflicts are all significant. As a result, the tenuous ties that bring communities together are being increasingly supplanted by new models of personhood and relationships, according to which commodities and personal success begin to predominate. As pointed out by Weiss, the main contradiction that characterises this new age is the rising contrast between inclusion and exclusion. From one perspective "Africans today find themselves seduced by the promise of compelling forms of identification and affiliation, which are facilitated by the presence of commodities and electronically disseminated images" (Weiss 2004a:8). People are engaged more than ever in multiple modes of connection, ranging from participating in global discourses about democracy and rights of citizenship; joining international religious networks (such as Muslim brotherhoods and Pentecostal churches); becoming part of long-distance migration chains. Yet for most people the growing possibilities of global connection coexist with an increasing marginality. In Africa, opportunities to participate in the global flow of capital are increasingly confined to a small elite, while the vast majority continue to be excluded from the circulation of wealth. In fact, the processes of liberalization that occurred over the last twenty years were experienced by most Africans as a widening gap between desire and possibility, "between mass-mediated landscapes of desire and a sense of pragmatic (im)possibility, between familiar ways and means and future projects and prospects" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2004). As growing volumes of capital and commodities circulate, only a small minority is profiting from the new situation and the accumulation of wealth and power has been increasingly interpreted as the

product of mysterious and evil forces (Weiss 2004a). Hence, for the majority of the African population, late capitalism has been marked by radical insecurity, as people seem less and less able to either comprehend or even anticipate their immediate future. As observed by Jean and John Comaroff,

> The position of Africa in the Neo World Order pivots on a paradox: the inclusion of Africa in the Neo World Order is founded on its exclusion, its negation, its erasure (template of bare life against which Euro-American modernity fashions itself), on the uncertainty that it even has a future (Comaroff and Comaroff 2004:334)

According to the authors, one of the most visible sites of this sense of crisis is in the spheres of generation and regeneration. Contemporary Africa, they described, is stuck in a widespread "crisis of social reproduction" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2004:312) related to several different spheres, spanning from the biophysical to the social and economic domains. This crisis of regeneration has manifold outcomes, such as the pathologization of procreation due to HIV and the rise of anxieties about reproduction; the radical changes in the production of personhood and in the creation of social value; intergenerational conflicts and the increasing distance between young and old due to the rupture in the passage of patrimony – material and immaterial - from parents to children (due to rising desemployment and subsequent postponement of marriage and adulthood); obstacles to the perpetuation of modes of production; and finally, a widespread crisis of masculinity. These authors therefore placed the present time as a turning point in the long-standing course of African modernity, one that is marked by the intensification of its contradictions and the failure of the promise of a "modern life". In their view, since the growth of a new global economy has deepened the marginalization of most African countries, what we are witnessing today would be "not merely a failure of social reproduction but an abortion of the expectations of modernity itself" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2004:335).

Faced with these dramatic changes and this enforced present, people appear to react in two different ways: on the one hand with a growing sense of despair, on the other with an intensification of desire and the will to aspire. As a matter of fact, the methods for "securing a future under radically uncertain conditions" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2004:335) can be quite heterogeneous, and a series of efforts of "active pursuit of enrichment in the face of scarcity"

(Comaroff and Comaroff 2004:344) is constantly planned and enacted. Examples include the engagement in informal economies and the use of force as a mode of redistribution, as well as the Pentecostal prosperity gospel. Hence, "Afropessimism can […] coexist with its opposite" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2004:346), and despair can go together with hope.

Instead of focusing on how people are acting in the present in order to examine the means by which they strive to produce their future, other authors have focused on the topic of imagination, exploring the ways in which individuals imagine a desired future. In her *Sex and Salvation. Imagining the Future in Madagascar*, Jennifer Cole (2010) delineated the interaction between the everyday ways in which people envision their future and their actions towards social change, focusing on two generations of women living in the city of Tamatave, Madagascar. Cole described the contrasting ways in which young women strive to achieve respected adulthood through the sexual economy, while older women frequently enter Pentecostal churches when their attempts to marry European men have failed. Through a dense ethnographic analysis, the author illustrated how emerging possibilities of social behaviour can offer Malagasy women alternative paths to the future.

According to popular opinion in Tamatave, both the participation of young women in the sexual economy, and the involvement of older women in Pentecostal churches are products of economic liberalization, and alternative ways to achieve prosperity. In fact, when their plan to marry a rich European fails, women often turn to one of the Pentecostal Churches which have emerged in Tamatave since the 1990s. At first Pentecostalism attracts these women because it offers a prosperity gospel according to which Jesus Christ blessed those who embrace his teachings with material wealth and physical well-being (see note 8). In this sense, new converts continue to share the same notions of self and social value - as well as the same practical goals and aspirations - as younger women involved in the sexual economy. But at a later stage, if they do not drop out of the church, they radically reconfigure their view concerning the past, present and future, as well as their understanding of their place in the social realm. At the same time, membership in these churches slowly separates members from their urban communities and commitments, which makes way for new social networks and pathways for the future. Consequently, the convergence between certain aspects of Pentecostal doctrine and local ideals gradually produces new concepts of personhood, along

with new patterns of action, new religious communities, and finally "historical change from below" (Cole 2010:177).

According to Cole, the circulation of women between the sexual economy and Pentecostal networks prove that despite the apparent contrast between the practices of sex and salvation, the people who engaged in them imagine their paths to be related. Since there is no formal proof of absolution, believers can never be sure of their salvation. In this sense, congregates are constantly relying on the image of sin in order to build their Christian self: hence the importance of relationships with non-Christian kin and neighbours to demonstrate what it means to be a good Christian. In this sense, in Tamatave, sex and salvation "become important conditions of each other's possibility" (Cole 2010:178), as "the futures enabled by sex always take place in relation to the alternative routes provided by salvation" (Cole 2010:155). Today in Tamatave, the pursuit of wealthy European males and engagement in Pentecostal networks constitute two alternative and coexisting trajectories, which are the outcome of a mix of aspirations and a sense of exclusion generated by contemporary social and economic circumstances. Both produce forms of "disembedding", disconnecting many Malagasy women from local networks and practices, thus "making them available for integration into new networks or institutions" (Cole 2010:189). Indeed, the young and old women portrayed by Cole seemed actively engaged in cutting off their obligations to their families and communities, while creating new kinds of commitments. Simultaneously, their new involvements led them to imagine and build their futures in different ways.

The contrasts and similarities between sex and salvation, conceived as two alternative but related paths by means of which Tamatavian women strive to create a new future, recall the relationship between evangelical Guineans and the surrounding society, both in the homeland and in the diaspora. As in the case described by Cole, Evangelical Guineans are constantly emphasizing the contrast between Christian and non-Christian kin and neighbours, projecting the image of sin (in Bissau, sin is mainly identified with involvement in traditional religious practices, whereas in Lisbon this is generally associated with youth delinquency). And yet, the circulation of people between Evangelical and non-Evangelical networks, as well as the temporary deviations during the lives of many evangelical believers, proves that people may imagine Evangelical and non-Evangelical paths in relation to each other. Moreover, as

conversion does not automatically imply salvation, Evangelical Guineans must dayly build their Christian identity through mechanisms of distinction from their non-Christian relatives.

Among the scholarship on how African societies are envisioning and producing their future, Charles Piot's *Nostalgia for the future. West Africa after the Cold War* (2010) is particularly relevant for my own research as it described a situation that shares many commonalities with the Guinean case. In this work Piot provided a detailed overview of the post-Cold War period in Togo, a time he defined as one "of extreme privation, of wild invention, of dramatic transformation", but also "a moment whose outcome is still unknown" (Piot 2010:5). Initially, just like other scholars (Mamdani 1996; Forrest 2003), Piot underlined the continuities between colonialism and post-colonialism: throughout the forty years of Gnassingbé Eyadema's dictatorial regime, the colonial system of dominance remained substantially unchanged. As well as his French predecessors, who ruled their rural subjects through an indirect system of chieftaincy, Eyadema maintained ties to the metropole, to support chiefdoms and to invest in traditional culture. However, at the turn of the millennium, Togo underwent a series of radical changes, following the processes of political and economic liberalization that hit West Africa after the end of Cold War. The effects of this twist in the lives of the Togolese were manifold, including the emergence of "rights of man" discourses against long-standing authority figures; the beginning of a time of economic privation and escalating prices; and the explosion of supposed witchcraft on the public sphere. In addition, the liberalization of political, media, and religious spheres was accompanied by a radical crisis of sovereignty, and the post-colonial state was affected by processes of fragmentation, pluralisation and privatization. By the end of the 1990s, the state had become weaker and weaker, withdrawing from the social field by disrupting welfare provision. Simultaneously, chiefdoms and gerontocracies were in decline, the rural ceremonial apparatus having been discarded and replaced by a more charismatic Christianity. With state sovereignty in retreat, Piot continued, Togo and its hinterland became a sort of "gray zone" (Mbembe 2006) beyond state control, whose inhabitants had been reduced to "bare life" (Agamben 1995). Although the author focused on the case in Togo, similar processes occurred throughout West Africa, including Guinea-Bissau.

Hence, for Piot, despite much continuity with the past, the end of the Cold War became a "periodizing rubric" as much in Togo as for many other neighbouring countries: as

a result of dramatic shifts in modes of sovereignty and forms of political-economic organization, a page has been turned. Therefore, in his opinion, radically changed historical conditions call for new theories for analysing ethnographic terrain. The post-colonial era in Africa was a time of dictatorial politics, reinvented tradition, cultural mixing, alternative modernities, and new subjectivities. Accordingly, post-colonial theory focused on hybrid culture, the ways in which the past affects the present, and on the cultural inclination to domesticate and indigenize what comes from outside. By contrast, the analysis of this "new post-post-colonial terrain" (Piot 2010:16) requires a new mode of theorizing, one recognises African institutions less for their reworking of Eurocentric culture but more in terms of "immersing in Euro-otherness" (Piot 2010:162). Charles Piot identified these new analytical tools in Hardt and Negri's (Hardt and Negri 2009) reflections about the current passage from "modern" to "imperial" forms of power. In their view, we are witnessing a transition from the vertical sovereignties of the modern and colonial nation-state to horizontal, more flexible forms of sovereignty.Today, horizontally linked supranational institutions (such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, but also NGOs and religious organizations), gain more and more power at the expense of nation-states. Their mode of sovereignty is a kind of "governance without government" (Hardt and Negri 2001:14) aimed at the regulation of social as well as economic politics. They exercise their power by "deciding who to support and who not to support, who will live and who will die" (Piot 2010:8).

Nevertheless, if the post-Cold War age can be described as a time of crisis, in Piot's opinion it can also be depicted as a moment of productivity. Indeed, the Togolese responded to the crisis in various ways. Firstly, by increasing their involvement in informal economies and practices of "inventing bricolage", such as scamming (the invention of false identities, manufacture of official papers and visas). Secondly, by changing their patterns of migration and by producing a growing imaginary of exile, as "those who leave today rarely return and those who remain behind dream of escape" (Piot 2010:15). Thirdly, by greeting and embracing a set of powerful new non-state actors - namely NGOs and Pentecostal churches – which sprung up in Togo during the 1990s, in the wake of the liberalization of the social and religious spheres. As state funds were rapidly disappearing, social and bio-political

intervention[5] was progressively transferred to these organizations, supported by international funding and by tithing within congregations.

As observed by the author, NGOs and churches have not only opened a space for the constitution of a new public sphere, but in demonizing tradition and urging a split with the past (Meyer 1998) they have also reconfigured local visions of time. In fact, their speeches on redemption and development prompt people to leave behind a past which is seen as hindering and haunting the present, in order to propel themselves into the future. As a result, the linear period of the dictatorship (which relates to the image of modernity as the arrow of time) and the continuous time of the ancestors are gradually replaced by a "punctuated" and event-driven temporality (Guyer 2007). From this perspective, time is imagined as a sequence of events or epiphanies, disconnected from each other. In Piot's opinion, this temporality fits a time of crisis, in which everyone is waiting for "an intercession that might be life-transforming", such as a visa, a miracle or child sponsorship (Piot 2010:66).

The case of Pentecostal churches is especially relevant for my own research. As observed by Piot,

> It is no accident that the charismatic churches burst onto the scene during the 1990s when the Cold War state was in eclipse – and this not simply because the potentate was no longer able to censor the political and religious life of the nation as before but also because the new churches fit with the antiauthoritarian spirit of the times. In important ways, the churches stepped into the gap left by a state that was forced to withdraw from the social field, thus also usurping the place of the dictator in the national imaginary. Moreover, through their attacks on tradition and gerontocracy in the villages, the new churches have played a crucial role in the unravelling of the indirect rule system that tied state to rural" (Piot 2010:54).

As the author pointed out, in addition to working as proxy for a declining post-Cold War state, and partially filling the gap left by the state in providing social services, Pentecostal churches function as "narrative-machines", generating narratives of rupture "that appeal especially to those who are weary of the old narratives that have for too long defined Africa as victim of forces and histories beyond its control" (Piot 2010:56). For instance, through blaming tradition stories, they reject village tradition and accuse pagan beliefs of being the

[5] Piot's use of the term "biopolitical" has its roots in Michel Foucault's concept of "biopolitics", as it was illustrated in his lecture series "Society Must Be Defended", given at the Collège de France from 1975 to 1976. For Foucault, biopolitics is the effect of " biopower", that is, the action of state power over the phisical bodies of a population as a whole. Examples of biopolitical control include the "ratio of births to deaths, the rate of reproduction, the fertility of a population" (Foucault 2003).

cause of Africa's poverty today. In Piot's view, these narratives could be read as a rejection of the colonial, insofar as they undermine the authority relations with the old regime, discrediting the Cold War state as well as chiefs and elders in rural areas. Another common narrative is that of a fallen humanity potentially rescued by Christ. Testimonies of sin and redemption are particularly appealing to those living in a world "of strong desires and limited means" (Piot 2010:65), a world marked by tensions between alternative moralities that inevitably lead to a sense of guilt over family responsibilities and personal pasts left behind. Before personal histories of wrongdoing the Pentecostal story of forgiveness promises liberation from sin and a new start. Yet, the most powerful narrative is probably that of the End of Time, in which, following the Second Coming of Christ, born-again Christians will receive the eternal salvation while sinners will be condemned to a world of war and suffering governed by the Antichrist. Besides providing a template for reading global and local politics (where believers constantly seek the signs for the end of time), this narrative endorses a millennialist concept of time. This is also a non-linear, punctuated temporality (Guyer 2007), resonating with other domains of everyday life, such as development practices and imagined occult phenomena, both implicating a non-linear temporality marked scanned by deadlines and unexpected occurrences. According to the author,

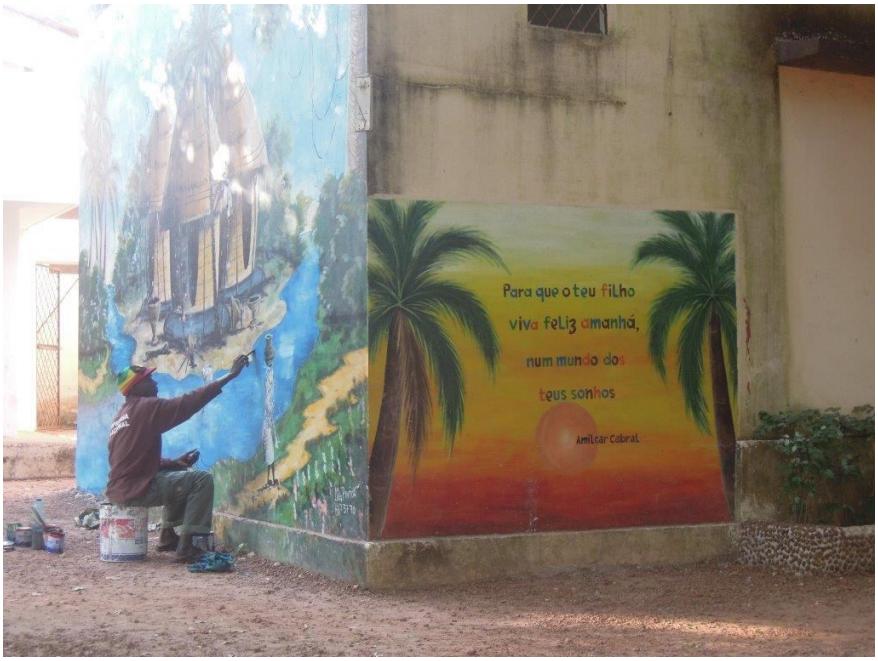
> The appeal of these narratives is related to people's exhaustion with the older (Cold War) narratives that connected West Africa to the metropole, on the one hand, and celebrated […] tradition and the village, on the other. These new Pentecostal stories […] are very much about the death of such earlier narratives (and the political-economic conditions that accompanied them) and about the birth of a new (post-Cold War) world. As such *they are accounts that empower and attempt to redefine historical agency - as less about a relationship or debt with the past, or to a colonial/postcolonial other in the present, and more about a nostalgia for the future* (Piot 2010:67).

In conclusion, Charles Piot illustrated the post-Cold War moment in Togo as one marked by a cultural revolution, one that is being played out against a rupture with the past and a nostalgia for the future. Such longing is not only representsed in the Christian End of Times narratives and the general quest for exit visas, but also in the embrace of development projects, which often support youth and leave elders behind. Moreover, both the Pentecostal desire to jettison the past and start anew, and villagers' embracing of NGOs, are gestures "aimed at recognition and seem motivated by the desire to be acknowledged as full members of the 21 century" (Piot 2010:166), passionate claims of citizenship and inclusion in global society (Ferguson

200 6). At the same time, this cultural revolution is in opposition to power and the status quo, and conveys a willingness to envision new social and political forms. Does this not reveal - Piot wondered - "a nascent post-national, even global, conception of citizenship"? (Piot 2010:169).

Therefore, Piot proposed an anthropology that takes into account the decline of local cultural formations, and goes beyond both theoretical moments, valorising the local and the local's encounters with others. By contrast, anthropology should recognize "those futurities and immanencies, those rescaled temporalities and spatialities, those commodified imaginaries and desires, those global aspirations that Togolese and many West Africans are today embracing with such zeal" (Piot 2010:170). Rather than continue to search for continuity and authenticity, we should, instead, recognize the legitimacy of West Africans' global aspirations, of their urgent hope for a better future.

This Togolese "post-politics-of-the-belly moment" (Piot 2010:16) has much in common with the current situation in Guinea-Bissau. Here, the crucial event that marked the transition from Nino Vieira's post-colonial regime to the present post-Cold War moment was the 7th of June War (1998-99). Nino Vieira's rule (1981-1999) could be described as a "politics of the belly" mode of government (Bayart 1989), characterized by a concentration of power in the hands of the President, who ruled the country through political repression, the appropriation of national wealth, and control of international relations in a context of economic dependence. By contrast, after the civil war and the end of Nino's regime the country entered a period of institutional and economic collapse, marked by the expansion of drug trafficking, which involved large segments of the political class and the military. Consequently, as happened in most African countries, as well as in Guinea-Bissau, new forms of "politics of the belly" are developing, adapted to current international circumstances, marked by the globalization of trade, deregulation of markets, and fragmentation of power. In this context, the transformation of drug routes and connections with international criminal organizations created new opportunities for economic accumulation amongst Guinean elites, resulting in new forms of criminality within the state (Bayart et al. 1999). At the same time, while the state was gradually losing the capacity to execute any form of policy, its place was taken by other social actors, such as NGO, churches, and other religious institutions.



5. Painting a mural at Casa Emmanuel

Dreaming of a better life in Bissau

One day, during my fieldwork in Bissau at the beginning of 2013, I visited Casa Emmanuel, a multifunctional centre founded by a Costa Rican Pentecostal missionary called Isabel Johanine, and financed by Portuguese Cooperation. The centre includes a small hospital, a school (running from nursery to high school) and an orphanage. According to local opinion, it is one of the few sites offering adequate social services in Bissau. Isabel Johanine - who has always been the director of Casa Emmanuel – told me how God gave her the vision and the means to build what she calls a "model project":

> Our model is one of comprehensive implementation of childcare. It is like a small country that has all the necessary policies. What is needed to practice good childcare? Health, education, a social area, waste collection, potable water and electricity. All that is here is a micro - project. [...].
>
> Guinea-Bissau is like a child who has a little, but who lacks everything; a child that is crying, who would like to have a different life. I love this country, it may have many faults, but I love it. And this is how I see it: as a child calling for something

> better for her. The parents of this child, that is the government, they do not respond to all of the child's needs. They are parents who do not care about their daughter, who are selfish and only think about themselves, who could help more. That is how I see Guinea (Isabel Johanine).

At a certain point while I was visiting the First Lady appeared to visit the centre, accompanied by a television crew. While waiting to interview the director, I took a tour in the courtyard of the orphanage. On the wall of a small building, I saw a man painting a mural, representing a lush island with a hut at the mouth of a river. Next to it was another painting, with a sentence by Amílcar Cabral: "May your son live happily tomorrow, in a world of your dreams". At first, this scene confused me, as the words of a Marxist revolutionary leader seemed to me rather out of place in an orphanage established by a Christian fundamentalist missionary. Yet, later on, I realized that this episode explained so many elements of the specific temporality experienced by Evangelical Guineans, both in the homeland and in the diaspora: a South American Pentecostal missionary, an image of the island of Utopia, a social institution managed by an evangelical organization and financed by international cooperation, the shadow of a murdered national hero, and the dream of a better future.

As illustrated in chapter 2, Guinea Bissau is going through a critical time period, especially after the 12th of April coup d'état in 2012. Indeed, political and economic instability have been persistent since the arrival of Independence, therefore, rather than a state of crisis, the situation in Guinea-Bissau can be defined as one of "permanent instability" (Vigh 2010). Nonetheless, as with many other African countries this post-Cold War moment constitutes an historical turning point in Guinea-Bissau. As many authors have pointed out, economic and political reforms following the fall of the Berlin Wall and the application of structural adjustment plans led to a new economic, political and, social order in Africa (Weiss 2004b; Comaroff and Comaroff 2004; Piot 2010; Bayart et al. 1999). In effect, the processes of liberalization that occurred in Guinea-Bissau during the late 1980s (see chapter 1) led to unregulated privatization; political destabilization; retreat of the state from the social field; the proliferation of illegal markets; criminality within the state; rising circulation of commodities and images from abroad; contraction of the public sector; polarization of wealth and poverty; a general rise of hardship; currency devaluation; and the emergence of a set of national and international non-state actors (such as NGOs and Evangelical churches), together with a boom

in long-distance migration. As in other countries in the region, the contrast between an increasing availability of foreign images and goods, as well as a rising possibility of global connections on the one hand, and an increasing lack of opportunities on the other, has been experienced by most Guineans as a growing gap between inclusion and exclusion, desire and possibility (Weiss 2004a; Comaroff and Comaroff 2004). This situation has resulted in a generalized quest for exile (Piot 2010), as transnational migration (*sai fora*) appears as one of the few opportunities to claim citizenship in the modern world (Bordonaro 2009). At the same time, as the vast majority of people remained excluded from migratory networks, this gap between inclusion and exclusion has led to rising frustration and a sense of marginalization.

This radical shift has had deep consequences on people's perception of the present. As noted by Wilson Trajano Filho (2008), for the inhabitants of Bissau the event that was perceived as the key time marker of this period was the 7 June War, which occurred between 1998 and 1999 and concentrated in the capital. Collective memory recalls this moment as when things got out of control, when people were no longer able to imagine and foresee their actions and those of others, with radical consequences for social life. In people's minds, the event is depicted as a long fight between brothers, suspended daily as the warring parties chatted with each other, while sharing food and munitions. In some cases, brothers fought on opposite sides of the conflict. More generally, many families split up, with the younger boys recruited within the militia called *Aguenta*, supporting Nino Vieira, and older men joining the *antigos combatentes* (veterans of the liberation war), fighting for the Junta Militar (Trajano Filho 2008; Vigh 2010).

According to common understanding, the 7 June civil war led to a time of deep uncertainty, of violent conflicts between selfish politicians, and a collapse of the state. This situation become even worst in the recurrent periods of governmental transition, when the state machinery stops working, with chaotic public life, incessant economic decline, and disintegration of social life. Trajano Filho (2008) observed how this sense of insecurity, social collapse, and absence of social rules is reflected in the rumours that constitute a collective comment on political and social life, especially within the Kriol society living in Bissau. Among the favourite topics of Kriol rumours are the wrongdoings of powerful and notable people, commonly depicted as something out of place, outside the rules of common life. Since the 1990s a number of rumours, full of gruesome details, continue to circulate about the

misdeeds of those in power, such as President Nino Vieira's habit of eating raw human flesh in the palace; or the repugnant behaviour of President Kumba Yala and his bodyguards, who used to urinate on the walls and defecate in the corners of the presidential building. Similarly to other portrayals of African elites circulating across the region, these rumours share the tendency to represent the actions of the powerful in terms of excess, appetite, exhibitionism, occult powers, and "state of exception" (Agamben 2008; Piot 2010), giving the idea that members of the elite live in a dimension of transgression, where laws and social norms have been are suspended. Another widespread narrative concerning the collapse of the common order, Trajano Filho continued, is that of the crisis of family solidarity. In this representation, one of the main factors of tension in the family group is the conflict between generations – a clash that appears to be a dominant trend in contemporary Africa (Comaroff and Comaroff 2000; Comaroff and Comaroff 2004). Throughout urban Guinea-Bissau, youths have become used to recounting stories about on their situation of "social moratorium" (Vigh 2010) marked by experiences of dependency, exploitation, and frustrated expectations. Chronic unemployment and lack of opportunities hinder the social development of young urban males, preventing them to achieve adult status, including the conditions to marry, own a house, and have children. For many young people, the only escape from this situation of forced dependence is transnational migration. A feeling of insecurity related to social reproduction is also expressed in rumours of child trafficking, which sometimes explode into episodes of urban violence. Such was the case in October 2013, when due to rumours about the alleged abduction of children for organ trafficking, several Nigerian citizens were attacked by the crowd – one of whom was killed – and the Nigerian embassy was besieged. Such narratives concerning obstructed masculinity, intergenerational conflict, and child trafficking may fall under the rubric of what Comaroff and Comaroff (2000; 2004) call a "crisis of social reproduction", a sense of insecurity in areas of generation and regeneration that can be seen to characterise the current neo-liberal moment in Africa, particularly in urban contexts. Yet, according to Trajano Filho, the system of Kriol rumours is not the only site in which the collapse of social structure is apparent. On the contrary, a sense of decline and social deterioration is also evident in the ways in which everyday life is commonly experienced and understood. The organization of time in Bissau follows neither the course established during the colonial period - when there was a time for wage labour and a time for rest - nor the

seasonal and cyclical rhythm of the pre-colonial periods. Rather, the specific temporality of everyday life in Bissau is nowadays marked by improvisation and the dissolution of daily routine. As most people do not have a regular source of income, nor can they rely on family network or the state to meet their most basic needs, they have to improvise, using all their skills and expertise to secure their daily survival:

> In the long and hot afternoons in Bissau, it is common to find people sitting on rustic benches placed under the shade of trees, or lying on the fresh ground in the narrow terraces built around the houses. They are there to kill time. [...] For them, waking up, eating something, leaving for work, going home and going to sleep, may be anything but routinized procedures. They simply do not know what they will eat in the coming hours. Every day is a new battle to survive (Trajano Filho 2008:249).

Describing the everyday life of young people in Bissau, Heinrich Vigh (Vigh 2010) observed similar behaviour and an attitude towards the present, which he associated with the emic notion of *dubria*. Probably deriving from the French *se débrouiller*, meaning to get by or make the most of a situation, the verb *dubria* - and the correspondent noun *dubriagem* - is a relatively new word in Kriol, but nowadays is on everyone's lips. It refers to the act of overcoming the difficulties of everyday life through creativity and smartness. It is a form of "navigating" the unfolding terrain of social relationships in contemporary Guinea-Bissau:

> *Dubriagem* designates the act of making the most of a situation and making things work to one's advantage. It is […] a dynamic quality of attentiveness and ability to act in relation to the movement of the social terrain one's life is set in. Thus *dubria*, the active form of the verb, encompasses both the immediate assessment of the dangers and possibilities of one's present position as well as the ability to envision, plot and actualise an advantageous movement from the present into an imagined future. In other words, it encompasses, both immediate survival and the drawing of trajectories into the imagined future […], designating a temporally dense action complex enabling one to survive in the here and now as well as to see one's life; i.e. to gain an idea of the possible course of one's life trajectory in an unfolding social terrain. Dubriagem, as such, refers to both the praxis of navigating a road through shifting or opaque socio-political circumstances and the process of plotting it (Vigh 2010:150).

Despite its common usage amongst all social groups, the term has a special meaning for youth, "dubiaduris par excellence": for them, *dubria* is a virtue, as well as the only available option (Trajano Filho 2008). At the same time, it is a judgment on a social system which is

perceived as inexorably collapsing, a sinking ship from which they would like to escape. Accordingly, together with their peers in Togo and all over Africa, Guinean urban youth are constantly creating "exit strategies" [6] (Bayart 1989) and "fantasies about exile" (Piot 2010).

According to Vigh, *dubriagem* has a dual temporality, entailing a movement through both the immediate present and the imagined future, enabling people to cope with everyday problems as well as plan their future lives. However, the distinct temporality associated with the concept of *dubria* seems to be less focused on the future and more on the present dimension. Or rather, it is an outlook according to which all expectations are invested in a flight from a stagnant present. It is the outcome of a pessimistic point of view, in which the country as suspended in a hopeless present, in a dimension of "durable decline" (Vigh 2010), in permanent transition and continuous limbo. Similarly to the white South Africans portrayed by Vincent Crapanzano, many urban Guineans are "caught in the structure of waiting" (Crapanzano 2003), in the constant expectation of an opportunity to leave. This pessimistic vision has to do with the disrepute into which the previous social narrative fell, that which placed actions and aspirations in a more general framework, including the colonial narrative of "civilization", the libertarian narrative of African nationalism and the neo-liberal narrative of society governed by the market (Trajano Filho 2008). Indeed, in this post-Cold War moment the failure of the promises of modernity - in all its manifestations – has resulted in widespread frustration and disillusion. Urban rumours and the *dubria* attitude seem to reflect a pervasive sense of disintegration in all areas of life. Apparently in urban Guinea-Bissau, as in the famous novel by Chinua Achebe (2003), things seem to "fall apart". As a result, the aspirations of many Guineans have gradually been channelled towards a private and personal horizon, focusing on the single individual and his or her close family, at the expense of collective dreams of a better life.

However, as many authors have observed, the crisis in contemporary Africa does not only lead to Afro-pessimism (Weiss 2004a; Comaroff and Comaroff 2004; Piot 2010). On the contrary, signs of vitality are visible in the many ways Africans are responding to the crisis, by seeking to secure and envision their future, despite living under radically uncertain

[6] According to Bayart (1989), the "exit strategy" is not a special feature of the current time in Africa. On the contrary, since pre-colonial times and across the continent, mobility would have been a common solution to escape political conflicts and material hardship. Nonetheless, the hallmark of the present time is the spread of the "exit strategy" in the practices and imagination of growing segments of the African population, especially amongst younger generations.

conditions. From my particular point of view, I believe that in urban Guinea-Bissau, as well as in the Guinean diaspora, one of the sites in which this liveliness is more evident is the Evangelical world. This is evident in the ways Guinean Evangelicals are becoming increasingly active in the country's social life, as well as in the complex forms in which they are engaged in planning and imagining a better future, not only at an individual level, but also more generally. In this sense it is remarkable that, while the inhabitants of Bissau consider the civil war (1998-99) as the key event that marked the shift towards the current crisis, the Evangelical minority's collective memory considers the 7th June conflict as a turning point following which churches have gained growing visibility in and influence over Guinean public life (see chapter 1). Indeed, by becoming children of God, the orphans of modernity seem to have found a new (spiritual) father.

Multiple temporalities between Bissau and the Kingdom of God

As noted in the first part of this chapter, many authors have paid attention to what they consider to be the distinctive features of the dominant temporality at the beginning of the twenty first century. Some have stressed the global trend towards risk (Appadurai 2013), others have emphasized the evacuation of the near future from the current temporal perspective, and its substitution with punctuated time (Guyer 2007). With regard to the prevailing temporality in contemporary Africa, some scholars have drawn attention to the ways in which people are struggling to secure their future under radically uncertain conditions (Weiss 2004a; Comaroff and Comaroff 2004). Others have focused on the variable and multiple forms in which African people imagine their future (Cole 2010), or on the ways in which, across Africa, the emergence of NGOs and Pentecostal churches on the public scene have reconfigured local visions of time and space (Piot 2010).

However, as Jane Guyer recognized, despite the global circulation of dominant temporalities, we are not all necessarily living in the same dimension, as specific communities – localized or in motion - can create alternative perceptions of time. Following this assumption, I argue that the particular, manifold vision of time held by Evangelical Guineans is the result of the encounter between particular historical and cultural circumstances, and peculiar ideas about future and hope that have their origin in Christian tradition. The outcome of this cross-over, I believe, should not be understood as a coherent synthesis generated by a

process of hybridising or syncretism. Currently, the recent emergence of the Evangelical minority in Guinea-Bissau is generating a specific vision of time that differs from both old and new perspectives. Following Jennifer Cole (2010), I see this shift in terms of a synergy, wherein local views merge with Christian categories of time, as well as with aspects of late capitalist global culture. An additional variable to consider is the coexistence, within the heterogeneous Evangelical Guinean world, of multiple Christian traditions. As I illustrated in Chapter 2, this movement includes old and new denominations, national and foreign churches, following conservative, Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal models. Even within the oldest Igreja Evangélica da Guiné-Bissau – which up to now has been the chief Protestant denomination in the country – conservative and Pentecostal doctrines and practices exist side-by-side. Hence, rather than a cohesive perspective, this emerging vision of time is better represented as a set of "multiple temporalities" (Cole 2010) used by individuals according to their variable circumstances and different communicative contexts.

As a backdrop to these multiple temporalities is the Christian notion of hope. As observed by many authors (Bloch 1986; Lain Entralgo 1957; Crapanzano 2003), hope is part of the very essence of Christian religion. Waiting to reach the Kingdom of God is a crucial theme in Christ's teachings and throughout the New Testament, and hope was included among the three theological virtues in scholastic theology, alongside faith and charity. What distinguishes the Christian interpretation of theological hope is its transcendent origin, as Christian hope is a virtue infused by God in men's heart (Lain Entralgo 1957).

The main assumption underlying this view is the rupture with a past associated with a personal life of sin, as well as with traditional ways of life. As many authors have pointed out, Evangelical and Pentecostal rhetoric in Africa is focused on the promotion of a radical break with the past – which is conceived as a looming threat on the present - and a symmetrical projection into the future. As noted by Charles Piot, the jettisoning of tradition can "anticipate the future while closing its eyes to the past" (Piot 2010). Yet, if Evangelical Guineans share this drive towards the future, this intention can be experienced and expressed in different ways.

The specific temporality of Evangelical Guineans can be understood as threefold. The first horizon is associated with the End of Time narrative, and is directed to the distant future.

The second and the third perspectives, both contained within the notion of *vison*, are oriented towards the near future.

Waiting for the End of Time

As anthropologists of evangelical Christianity have highlighted (Crapanzano 2000; Harding 2000; Robbins 2004), since the 1970s, most branches of Protestantism, in the Unites States and throughout the world, have embraced a radically millennialist and dispensationalist orientation toward time, focused on waiting for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and the subsequent End of Time. According to this widespread narrative - based on the Book of Revelation, the Book of Daniel and the Letters of Paul – the current age constitutes a pause between the first and second coming of the Messiah. In John's prophecy, when Christ returns, the righteous will be separated from the wicked, true Christians shall ascend to heaven, while sinners will be condemned to a world of war and suffering governed by the Antichrist, and time will turn into eternity. Believing that time is about to end, most Evangelicals all over the world experience daily life with an attitude of "expectant waiting" (Guyer 2007), constantly reading the signs of the Parousia, which is simultaneously deemed both imminent and undetermined. Understood as a gap in time endured by waiting and witnessing, as in the Letters of Paul, the "time of now" is lived as a "messianic time", a "time that remains", an "unfinished pause" (Agamben 2005: 64) or a "future unfolding" (Harding 2000: 240). It is also a time marked by a paradox: on the one hand salvation is already accomplished for believers, on the other its complete fulfilment requires yet more time (Agamben 2005).

At the same time, the End of Time narrative provides a frame for interpreting modern life, such as global or local events - wars, floods, earthquakes, etc – which are constantly scrutinized in the search for signs of the Second Coming. Of course, financial bankruptcies are also understood within this framework, including the economic crisis affecting Portugal since 2010, as in the words of Pastor Quintino:

> Well, of course, it may be early, it cannot be too soon, but someday He will return. Because the signs foretold, when Christ was living, they have already been seen. For example earthquakes, floods, wars […] and the return of the Israelites to Israel […].

> It's all in the Bible, prophesied by Jesus. And this crisis, think only about this crisis that is occurring here. The European Union, when did it start? It has been prophesied in the Bible [...]. In the book of Daniel, chapter 7, you see?
>
> Have you heard of Freemasonry? [...]. And what is behind this secret organization? It's the devil! All the powers are concentrated in them. And economic power. They are concentrated in them, aren't they? It is clearly prophesied in the Bible, anyone who reads understands, knows, that the end is near. And when the end comes, Jesus will come. He will come and take the Church [...]. And the dead, believers who died faithful in Christ too, they will rise again. Then everyone goes to heaven. And then Jesus will come back, won't he? (Second phase). For what? To judge the living, along with the church, to judge the living and the dead too. Those who died without faith, they will stay underground for more than a thousand years. So all this is a prophecy of what is going to happen. In the face of this, we confirm what has been already written.
>
> So we believe that Jesus will come. When, we do not know. Because he said that neither he nor the angels, but only the Father knows when He will return. He only gave us the signal: when He will be back, many events will happen. And these events, they have already been seen. The important thing is to remain faithful, for He said: "When I will come, will there be faith on earth?". It would be good if he would find faith on earth. That people continue to believe in Him.

Despite the centrality of the End of Time narrative found in the speeches of pastors and leaders, waiting for the Second Coming does not seem to have a deep influence on the everyday life of evangelical believers in Guinea-Bissau. Apparently, members are interested less in the remote future horizon, and more in the short and middle term.

Vison di nha vida (vision of my life)

The second orientation is focused on the individual, and is based on the concept of *vision*, as illustrated by Pastor Quiletch's sermon, at the beginning of the chapter. This notion has its origin in a basic principle of Christian theology, which places salvation and truth within the individual believer, as the main site of the encounter with God. And yet, if a Christian can

find the transcendental within him/herself, as was taught by Augustine, it is not by his own virtue, but through the grace of God. Therefore, from a doctrinal viewpoint, the Evangelical idea of vision has a double dimension: on the one hand, *vison* is the plan that a single believer has for his or her life; on the other, it is the plan that God has for his or her individual salvation. Thus, the precondition so that each believer can fulfil his or her plan is that their inner vision matches God's vision. And the understanding of God's design for one's life is a matter of both divine inspiration and discernment capacity. On the one hand, one can never be certain that one's vision corresponds to that of God's, as proved by the common narratives which pastors share about their calling to ministry. A recurrent trope is that before becoming a minister the individual in question had plans of personal achievement – be these professional or academic - that had nothing to do with pastoral vocation. However, at a certain point in his life, God called him to dedicate his life to His service, through dreams, prophecies, and Bible readings. As in the biblical story of Jonah, the eventual pastor first tried to resist God's call, but then, after a series of personal failures, he came to accept God's design and surrender to His will.

These narratives show the importance of a constant and intimate relation with God through various techniques of the self, such as fasting, prayer and Bible reading, in order to align oneself with godly designs. Although the correspondence between personal and godly visions can never be taken for granted, believers can obtain a certain level of security if things are going according to their plans – if they are succeeding in their studies, their relationships, or professionally. A second condition for the fulfilment of one's dream is self-discipline: as Quiletch stressed, believers have to remain focused on their vision, without succumbing to the distractions sent by Satan. Vision is something that requires attention and care, that must be cultivated, disciplined and protected. If the plan of a believer is in accordance with God's design, and s/he continues on the righteous path, focused on his or her vision, without succumbing to distractions, then they may reap rewards. Frequently in their sermons pastors urge their flock to have great ambitions: if one aims low God will grant small blessings; if one aims high, God will grant great blessings. Curiously, Quiletch's words resonated strongly with the sermon given by Pastor Elias at MEL, during the last Sunday worship of 2012, just one week before:

> You know that the young people of this church have so much vision. They see great things. I give thanks to God for the youth of this church. Here there are no young people having a chicken's vision. Do you know what a chicken's vision is? The chicken just looks immediately around it. But the youth of this church have an eagle's vision. The eagle looks far into the distance and attacks immediately… Look at the vision of this great man: "Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates — all the Hittite country — to the Mediterranean Sea in the west" (Josh. 1:4). Look at his view! So great, it is not just a small expanse that he sees. Joshua was trying to take that place as the inheritance of God in his life. Your projects have to be eagle's projects. There are many people who have a project, they are fighting: "won't I …?" But when God puts a vision into your life, to do something, you will do it, even though many people do not understand that vision [...]. In order to achieve anything it is always hard to start out [...]. This is good advice for anyone who wants to conquer their life, to look at great things [...]. There is nothing that you cannot solve: just believe and just have a vision of what you want to achieve, and God will put it in your hands. And you will win, in the name of Jesus. You must have plans. You must have a strategy. You must know how and when to act [...]. We can also take the example of this man, Joshua. He knew how far he needed to go. Often we also want to do something but we do not know how far we can go. But Joshua had a map, he had limits in his life. There are many brothers here who have no limits. They want to do things in their own way, without God's vision. You must have limits. The vision lives within the limits of God. And when we have limits, God will make things happen [...]. In your life, in your projects, you have to be part of God's plans in order to realize your vision. Only then can the glory of God fall upon us.

These words show the influence of the Pentecostal prosperity gospel within the Guinean Evangelical world[7] – including the diaspora - albeit in a mitigated version. According to this

[7] As observed in chapter 2, historical circumstances explain the heterogeneity of the Guinean Evangelical movement. In this context, "conservative" doctrines, practices and styles transmitted by early Protestant missionaries coexist with Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal models, conveyed by new churches that arrived in Guinea-Bissau in the last two decades. Nonetheless, Pentecostal practices and ideas are also increasingly circulating within the older – and more conservative - Igreja Evangélica da Guiné-Bissau, which until now has been the main denomination in the country.

global Pentecostal doctrine, widespread in Africa since the 1990s, material wealth and well-being are considered as blessings from God, as well as signs of divine grace (Corten e Marshall-Fratani 2001; Marshall 2009; Cole 2010). Prosperity is presented as being given to those who live exemplary Christian lives, and use material gains according to Jesus's rules. Moreover, besides being a sign of God's grace and personal salvation, individual success combined with righteousness and honesty contributes to the expansion of God's plans. Since it offers an example to sinners, it "makes a difference" and shows the glory of God to the world[8].

Vison di nha terra (vision of my country)

Yet, the notion of *vision* has a second meaning, with reference to the idea of a higher Common Good. Although some authors have stressed the individualistic side of Pentecostalism (Comaroff and Comaroff 2000; 2003) – at least in its more recent wave of success – in the case of the Guinean Evangelical movement the future horizon is not necessarily limited to the believer's personal life. Actually, as Pastor Quiletch emphasized, one may also have a vision about one's church, or one's nation. Indeed, the well-being and the progress of Guinea-Bissau were topics which recurred frequently both in sermons and personal conversations throughout my fieldwork. Worship gatherings and meetings often began with prayers such as this:

> Let's say a prayer for our country, especially for the political situation in Guinea-Bissau [...]. We need for God to control the political situation of the nation. To act to break this cycle of coups that we are living in. In the name of Jesus, we know that we can only turn to God, as He is the solution to all our problems [...]. Jesus, you are the solution for this nation, you have all the power [...] heal this nation completely! Lord, you know the situation of this country, you know the hearts of men, you know what happened [...]. Spread your glory across this nation, come and heal our wounds [...].

[8] The prosperity doctrine has its origins in the Word of Faith movement (also called "health-and-wealth" or "name it and claim it") that spread in the United States since the 1970s. The preachers of the Word Faith, which had a strong influence on the Pentecostal "new wave" in Latin America, Africa and Asia since the early 1980s, claimed that God provides the faithful with spiritual as well as material blessings. These forms of wordly wellbeing - which include money, but also phisical health and personal success - could be evoked simply by naming and asking them in the name of Jesus (Marshall 2009).

> We know that your will is that we can live a life of peace [...]. Lord, we forgot our past Lord, make this nation progress [...]. Dear brothers, let us also pray that God will remove all obstacles to preaching in this nation. We know that our enemy is not pleased with the progress that Gospel has made in this land, and he has raised many obstacles to the Lord's churches. And we need to pray that God will remove all these obstacles, so that the Gospel can reach every corner of this nation, in the name of Jesus[9].

I often heard narratives describing Evangelical churches as having the "monopoly of hope"[10] in Guinea-Bissau, in contrast with the hopelessness of common people, victims of famine and disease and forsaken by the state, and the distrust of a selfish ruling class, who are only interested in plundering the country. Frequently, these narratives reproduce in their own fashion the rhetoric of progress and development expressed by NGOs and international institutions, as in the words of Pastor Dionísio Rodrigues, an IEGB missionary working in the East of the country:

> In the rainy season, it is almost time of famine in *tabancas* (villages). You see hungry children. I have already given food to many people, I opened my home, at least to children [...]. Pregnant women die too. And when election time comes, they give a bag of rice to each person! People are happy and vote, and the next day they still die. There's so much despair among the people…
>
> I've taken [sick] children on the road from Sintchambotche to Gabu, the road was so bad, we could not reach Gabu quickly , and children died in our car. It is painful, you make so many efforts to save a life, and then they die as well... You go back and the mother says: "*Djtu ca tene*" (no way, it is God's will). Sometimes I fight this attitude: it is not God's will that children are dying. If God gave life it is because He wants them to live [...]. These people face so many problems that now they accept the situation, and everything that happens they say: "It is the will of God" [...].

[9] Intercessory prayer recorded during the Mission Conference at the Jovens para Cristo centre, Bissau, January 2013.

[10] I thank Nina Tiesler for having suggested this expression, during the presentation "One or two things that I know about the future", made by Ramon Sarró during a seminar at the Institute of Social Sciences of Lisbon.

> But I believe that this is just a certain period that we are living in Guinea, all this will pass. Guinea will emerge, we will have good days, our story will not be the one which we are experiencing now, but peace will return. We will find people who love this land, who love this country, and who are really interested in fighting to stabilize this country. We need help from worthy people, so that our people will experience development. I believe in this, that is why I am still fighting with all my force as part of my religious faith, I strive for the development of my people... For me the Gospel is an instrument of God's to effect change [...]. I saw how the the Word of God transformed me, I feel responsible for sharing it, knowing that only the Word of God will change our minds and enable us to change our society. When this society experiences pure Gospel, people will change […]. It is very sad our situation, but as they say, hope is the last thing to die, so we have hope in Guinea-Bissau […]. We do not want this cyclical upheaval that we have been having. I never gave up my faith in Guinea Bissau, I never thought that this country will sink, as many people have said. I believe that one day this nation will emerge, not even in my generation, but my children will feel the sweetness of Guinea. That's why I am working hard, to see this dream to come true.

Sometimes, Evangelical hope is accompanied by a lucid analysis of the present and a fairly accurate and detailed forecast for the near future. This was the case in the interview conducted with the Evangelical journalist and civil rights activist Elizabeth Fernandes. In her interview she presented her vision of the country's near future, combining an accurate understanding of the current political situation with her faith in God's action in history. Importantly, Elizabeth made explicit reference to the ideals of the liberation struggle, representing the Evangelical movement as the heir of nationalist dreams:

> I am very optimistic, sometimes too optimistic. But I see Guinea-Bissau in ten years' time as a stable country, a country moving towards the development of what we dreamed of fourty years ago, at the time of the liberation struggle [...]. We are in West Africa, the sun rises from east to west, but in this case the Gospel will grow from West to East. Because Islam is very strong across the sub-region. Here, also, the majority of

> [merchants] are Muslim; on Friday at 2 pm it is rare to find any shop open. They are all Muslim and they pray. But the Evangelical Church is also growing so much here, and we do not only evangelize those who are Catholic, but also those who are Muslim. The Evangelical Church in the East is growing. And I think that this is not only the case for Guinea-Bissau. It may be starting here, but it will spread to the rest of the continent. [...] About ten years ago the youth associations were much more active than they are today, but somehow they instilled the idea of community: I do not work just for me, my house, my food, although it is a priority, but I also work for my community, for my city. So in a way it helps people to work better together, not because one ethnic group is better than another, but because we are all Guineans and we are working towards a common good, which is the development of our country […].
>
> Guinea-Bissau has huge potential in terms of human resources. We have many skilled people in different areas, people who have returned to work in Guinea-Bissau. I decided not to stay in the United States, I came here because that [the USA] is a country that is already established. Whatever I do there nobody will know about it. But here, there is some contribution to be made; I'm doing something for my country. And somehow this is the mindset of many of my colleagues who came back, who were living in Lisbon and other countries. Because if I am working abroad, I'm working for another country, I will be developing another country and not my own. Here, despite being paid less than I would be paid there, at least I know there's a prize for my work. Maybe I won't see it in my generation, but I hope to see… not a developed Guinea-Bissau, because development is a process, but I hope to see my country heading in a better direction. A better health system, especially a better education system. Because we have enough skilled people to do it, and we have enough will to do it. And when there are delays such as coups and wars it does not help. But I think that this generation is going to run out of steam, it has no more strength. So the new generation, not necessarily mine, older people too, we are already working on it.

These dreams of a better future have a strong political value, and can be associated with the peculiar political programme of Evangelical Guineans. As illustrated in Chapter 2, the Evangelical movement in Guinea-Bissau is actively engaged in the utopian project to

transform the state through evangelization. It is a project of individual and collective redemption, wherein individual conversion opens the space for the political salvation of the nation. In this sense, conversion is a means to create the "ideal citizen" (Marshall 2009), the "*homem novo*" (new man, see below) able to "make a difference", both in spiritual and in socio-political sphere. This totalizing program does not envision a revolution or a radical change within the actual political system, but rather foresees the redemption of society and the state through the spreading of the Gospel. In this sense, it is a politics of hope rather than a politics of desire, insofar as it considers human agency insufficient to attain collective life, depending instead on God's action for its fulfilment (Crapanzano 2003). However, the emphasis on individual salvation reveals an inherent ambivalence, and a difficulty in creating the basis for a political community "on this Earth", as it rejects the existence of other religions in a country which is marked by a high degree of religious pluralism. Thus, although Evangelicals may see their programme as having a great world-transforming potential, they are fostering what can be deemed an "anti-political politics" (Piot 2010) or a "negative political theology" (Marshall 2009) that is not without its contradictions.

From orphans of modernity to children of God

One of the central debates in the study of religion in Africa concerns the way in which, unlike predicted by the modernization theory of the 1960s, actual modernization has not eradicated or weakened the vivacity of the religious scene in Africa (Appadurai 2013; Ter Haar 2008). On the contrary, the dynamism of the religious sphere, as well as the emergence of religious movements in African public life, is widely visible. In the case of Christianity, many scholars have pointed to the shift in its centre of gravity from Europe and Northern America to Africa, Asia and Latin America, a process that has been called the "southernization of Christianity" " (Jenkins 2011; Jenkins 2006). In many respects, the very effervescence of the religious scene seems, in fact, to be an agent of modernity in contemporary Africa. All over Africa religious organizations – together with NGOs – have filled the gap left by a state that was forced by neoliberal reforms to withdraw from the social sphere. As a result, as noted by Charles Piot (2010), churches and NGOs have taken over the social and bio-political fields. In the case of Guinea-Bissau, both Islamic and Christian associations, established since the 1990s and financed by foreign contributions as well as members' donations, are replacing the state as

providers of social services, including education, health and development projects. Yet, religious organizations are becoming proxies of post-colonial African states in another important sense. Indeed, the secular versions of modernity promoted by nation-states are losing strength and credibility in citizens' eyes. Indeed, in the wake of neoliberal reforms, states appear to no longer be able to implement effective development programmes on a secular basis. By contrast, in offering social services and associated infrastructure, religious movements present themselves as more reliable agents of modernity. In so doing, they foster a sense of possibility that appeared buried under the debris of the post-colonial state.

In the case of Guinea-Bissau, the failure of secular modernity goes back to the deterioration of the nationalist dream. In the 1960s and 1970s, under the leadership of Amílcar Cabral, the anti-colonial movement conveyed a persuasive narrative of social and cultural regeneration, capable of motivating colonial subjects and drawing them into the nationalist project. Indeed, it was through popular consent and the active participation of peasants – chiefly Balanta warriors - that the PAIGC was able to win the colonial war. The utopian aspect of the Guinean national movement is evident in Cabral's writings, as well as in PAIGC's efforts to build a new society in the liberated areas during the liberation war. As Cabral declared in a famous document,

> Always remember that the people are not fighting for ideas, nor for what is in man's mind. The people fight and accept the sacrifices demanded by the struggle in order to gain material advantages, to live better and in peace, to benefit from progress and for the better future of their children. National liberation, the struggle against colonialism, the construction of peace, progress and independence are hollow words devoid of any significance unless they can be translated into a real improvement of living conditions (Cabral 1974: 46)[11].

Following the Cassacá Congress (February 1964), the PAIGC started to lay the foundations for the future society and nation state by establishing a political and administrative organization, implementing economic policies and creating a germinal welfare state (Chabal 1983, 2002). Social reconstruction in liberated areas was based on Cabral's pragmatist as well humanist assumption that people's welfare constituted the main way in which PAIGC could gain villagers' support, as well as legitimacy for political action. As Patrick Chabal pointed

[11] Cited and translated in Chabal (1983: 105).

out, "the central aspect of Cabral's leadership lay in his unparalleled ability to combine political effectiveness with a high degree of adherence to human decency as a principle of political action" (Chabal 1983: 154). PAIGC's social policies in liberated areas were particularly focused on health and education. The Portuguese rulers had invested very little in health infrastructure, and had completely delegated "indigenous education" to the Catholic Church. In contrast, despite its limited financial resources, by 1971-72 the PAIGC had established a basic system of health dispensaries and primary schools across the areas under its control. In particular, Cabral viewed schooling as an important means of creating political consciousness among Guinean villagers, as well as for the education of the "*homem novo*" (new man), the subject-citizen of the future nation (Chabal 1983).

Investment in welfare continued after Cabral's murder and during the first years following independence, as the new state was supported through international cooperation, both from Western Europe and the Soviet bloc. Yet, the process of liberalization led to a gradual reversal of the slight progress achieved in welfare state provision since the late 1980s. While I was roaming across Bissau with my Guinean friends in search of medicines, medical tests or health care, they used to remember with nostalgia the early years of independence, when Guinea-Bissau was the "Switzerland of Africa" and people came from all over West Africa to be treated at the Simão Mendes hospital – the central hospital of Bissau. Although these may be idealized memories, they clearly reflect the common perception of a marked contrast between the immediate post-colonial past and the post-Cold War present, with regards to public health. More generally, they hint at a time of social aspirations and political commitment, a time when a Guinean path towards modernity and development still seemed possible and within reach. Indeed, the murder of the national hero and the events that followed, including Nino Vieira's military regime, led to the failure of the nationalist dream in Guinea-Bissau and Cape-Verde, as happened in most African countries. As Aristides Pereira[12], interviewed by José Vicente Lopes (2012), remarked:

> We cannot forget that Africa rose in the 60s, full of hope, but it faded after a short time. And why? For lack of a collective design, lack of historical awareness of the mission we were tasked with, in short, of an ideology dictated by our own reality and not by the mere importation of concepts that often had

[12]Aristides Pereira, Cape-Verdean, was one of the leaders of the PAIGC during the liberation war, together with Luís and Amílcar Cabral. He was the first President of Cape-Verde, serving from 1975 to 1991.

> nothing to do with concrete reality. Having ideology, for Cabral, was knowing what to want under certain conditions related to our struggle, or our life (Lopes 2012: 172).

While these collective dreams of a better future appear to have vanished for most people, they seem to have re-emergeed in a different guise amongst Evangelical Guineans. Besides having replaced the state in providing social services, Evangelical churches – similar to Islamic organizations - seem to now have the "monopoye of hope" in the Guineans imagination. In a certain sense, as illustrated by the phrase on Casa Emmanuel's wall, Evangelical churches appear to have inherited the legacy of Amílcar Cabral.

If at first sight nationalists' ideals and evangelicals' hope may appear at odds with each other, at another level of analysis they can be understood as two distinct expressions of the human drivee towards a "good life" (Appadurai 2013), or a "good new" (Bloch 1986), regardless of their specific contents. Ernst Bloch argued a parallel between Christianity and Marxism in his *The Principle of Hope* (1986). In this work, Bloch viewed hope as a basic principle of the human being, emerging under various guises throughout the course of history. As he stated, "everybody lives in the future, because they strive" (Bloch 1986: 4). This tension towards the "good new" has been continuously experienced by the human kind: throughout history, and in all cultures people have produced various kinds of utopias, ranging from mere daydreams to the fantasies contained in fairytales, film and theatre, to utopias designed in architecture, painting or literature, to humans venturing beyond the limits in religion, up to the "concrete utopia" represented by socialism. In all of these cases, the central thrust is for the highest good.

For Bloch, Marxism is the first philosophy of the future: it is only through Marxism that the real essence of the world disclosed to human consciousness, and the static concept of being gives way to a more dynamic conception: "Essential being is not Been-ness; on the contrary: the essential being of the world lies itself on the Front" (ibid: 18). Moreover, unlike previous utopias, socialism creates a "concrete utopia", running through "exact anticipation" and connecting hope with planning and reason. While most abstract social utopias (namely in religion) depict a better world in order to forget the existing world, Marxism has given rise to the theory-practice of a better world in order to change it economically and dialectically.

While placing Marxism as the highest point of human drive towards the future, at the same time Bloch connected it to early forms of utopian aspiration, including Christianity.

Bloch's appraisal of Christianity, at least in what he sees as its authentic core, is quite positive. According to him, the message contained within Jesus Christ's teaching and life is genuinely utopian, to the extent that it projects the end of human suffering: "Christianity is not […] heaven as the throne-room of Yaveh", and Jesus "did not put in existing man but the utopia of something humanly possible whose core and eschatological fraternity he exemplified in his life" (ibid: 1260). Unlike any previous religions, Christianity takes its strength from the historical reality of its founder, a man that distinguished himself by his simply goodness, by his attraction towards the poor, the despised, the oppressed and the marginal, and his rebellion against those in power. A man, therefore, who directed his "expectations of change in the side points of the world" (ibid: 1261). And then, the memory of Jesus after his death generated a "second eschatology", establishing unprecedented dimensions of hope: he would return to fulfil the kingdom of man, appointing the Holy Ghost as his representative until that return. Hence, Bloch argued, Jesus himself became the future element contained in the eschatology of the kingdom, forecasting "the apocalyptic transformation of the world into something as yet completely inexistent". Furthermore, the centrality of the man Jesus Christ would erase the absolute transcendence of God, turning the creator into an ideal goal: by virtue of this relation between perfect future and humanity of Christ, "the glory of God becomes that of the redeemed community and of its place" (ibid: 1274).

Hence, in Bloch's view Christian "advent morality" is a sort of anticipation of Marxism after its own fashion, one that prefigures socialist promotion of humanity and the drive towards the future while lacking Marxist knowledge and propensity to change the world. Both Christianity and Marxism are moved by that principle of hope which is never passive, although it can be deceptive. On the one hand, the church's promises of the other world is empty, to the extent that a higher good is envisaged without a change in the state of things. On the other hand, if knowledge must destroy rotten optimism, it should not wipe out the urgent hope for a good end. "Social progress certainly demands […] that prejudices, false consciousness and superstition are thrown out and remain behind, but […] it never demands that forward dreams should remain behind (ibid: 1365). That is why, in Bloch's opinion, hopelessness is the bitter enemy of socialism, together with capital. In fact, blind optimism

can still be lead to an awakening, whereas nihilism produces paralysis and cannot be corrected at all.

Returning to the case of Guinea-Bissau, in some way evangelical churches seem to have revitalized the utopian impulse of those who fought for the independence of the nation. Significantly, one of the central notion in the texts of Amílcar Cabral is the concept of "*homem novo*" (new man), the citizen of the future nation, emerging from the liberation war. Cabral was referring to a concept which was central to the Soviet experiment, implicating the transformation of the individual human, body and soul, in order to remake society through the creation of a new type of man. The Stalinist version of the new man, while having its origins in Russian political thought and cultural history, was designed for domestic as well as for external use, and was quite widespread in many socialist countries. Nonetheless, despite its centrality in socialist ideology and its circulation throughout the socialist world, this concept has a striking resonance with the Christian motif of the new man, described for the first time by Paul of Tarsus. In his letters, Paul describes the special transformation that a person undergoes, when he or she encounters Christ. In Paul's view, the relation with the Messiah revokes any mundane condition and totally renovates the self, as any former identity loses its value:

> That, however, is not the way of life you learned when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds;and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness [Eph. 4:22-24].

> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! [2 Cor. 5, 17]

The parallel between Cabral's and the Christian notion of new man may go even further. Strikingly, Cabral's ideas of progress, modernity and development have many points in common with the current narratives of evangelical Guineans. The political project of the PAIGC's leader to build a new, just and progressive society had manifold dimensions, which including the political, economic, military and cultural domains as well as the individual

sphere. This totalising program is evident in Cabral's discourse about the multiple aspects of resistance:

> Our struggle [...] must be taken at all levels of life of our people. We must destroy everything that can serve the enemy to continue their domination over our people, but at the same time, we have to be able to build whatever is necessary to create a new life in our land. While we destroy the enemy ... we have to build ourselves, to ensure the satisfaction of the needs of our people, to make skilled men and women, to improve every day the conditions of life in our land [...] [We must] destroy the enemy's economy and build our own economy, destroy the negative influences of the culture of the enemy and develop our own culture, destroy the physical ailments that colonialism caused us, to build a stronger and more capable new man (Cabral 1974: 43).

In Cabral's view cultural resistance consisted of "defeating the colonial culture and the negative aspects of our own culture in our spirit", and "creating a new culture based on our traditions, but respecting all that the world has achieved today to serve the man" (ibid: 190). Hence while he encouraged his comrades to "leave in our head that aspect of human, scientific culture that the *tuga* [the Portuguese] brought to our land by chance, and entered our head too" (ibid: 188), he also, as noted by João Vasconcelos (2004), harshly attacked those indigenous mentalities that he judged as reactionary and superstitious, especially beliefs in spirits and witchcraft[13]:

> The armed liberation struggle requires [...] the progressive demolishment of the remnants of tribal mentality, the refusal of rules and social and religious taboos which are contrary to the development of the struggle (gerontocracy, nepotism, social inferiority of women, rites and practices which are incompatible with the rational and national nature of the struggle, etc..) and it operates many other profound changes in people's lives. The armed liberation struggle, therefore, implies a real forced march on the path of cultural progress (ibid: 117).
>
> To further our victorious fight [...] we must educate ourselves, educate others, the population in general, to fight fear and ignorance, to gradually eliminate the submission by nature and natural forces,

[13] When Cabral attacked traditional beliefs, he was generally addressing his Guinean audience. By contrast, the same "African" beliefs were romanticized with respect to Cape-Verdeans. Actually, the consolidation of the political unity between Guinea and Cape Verde, central in the PAIGC program, required a complex explanation to Cape Verdean and Guinean people. In order to create a sense of identity in both populations, it was necessary to stress their common cultural roots, while also transcending them to generate a new modern society (Vasconcelos 2004).

> that our economy has not yet mastered. To fight without unnecessary violence against all negative forces which are harmful to man and are still part of our beliefs and traditions. To persuade little by little, in particular Party members, that we will finally win over the fear of nature, that man is the most powerful force of nature (Cabral 1994: 49-52).

> We will not only free our people from *tuga* colonialists, no, but from all that hinders the path of progress. We have to destroy ignorance, lack of health and all kinds of fear, little by little... When we will manage it, we will have truly freed the people of our land. Because the greatest pressure on a people is not that of colonialists, comrades, it is not the lack of work, it is fear. People who are afraid are slaves. Fear of starvation […] fear of beatings, fear of being deported to Sao Tome, fear of being arrested unfairly. But even more, fear of healers, fear of those who cast lots, fear of *mouros'* conversation, fear of "*iran*", fear of the dark wood, fear of lightning [...] Unfortunately people have so many fears, comrades (ibid: 138).

As pointed out by João Vasconcelos (2004), Cabral attacked traditional beliefs as well as the direct colonial influence because they legitimated customary authorities, which were associated with colonial rule and constituted an obstacle to the party's hegemony. Similar to other leaders of independent states which arose in Asia and Africa after World War II, Cabral's rhetorical efforts were aimed at urging the former colonial subjects to desert their local and primary forms of loyalty – to family, tribe, and traditional hierarchies – and turn to the future nation, which was at that time little more than a fragile abstraction (Appadurai 1996: 162). And yet, his discourse succeeded in mobilizing large segments of the population, especially in rural areas.

If Cabral's jettisoning of "all negative aspects of our beliefs and traditions" is consistent with Marxist rationalism, it is also resonant with the evangelical demonization of the traditional past. The issue of fear is particularly central in evangelical discourses on ancestral beliefs and the occult world, as well as in personal narratives of conversion, as I observed in chapter 1. The circulation of ideas between socialist and Christian traditions is even more plausible if we assume that Amílcar Cabral came into contact with the evangelical world during his childhood and youth, as affirmed by many of my interlocutors. In fact, according to oral history, a part of Amílcar's family was evangelical, including his half-brother Luís Cabral, who served as a Sunday school teacher at the Nazarene Church in the island of Praia, Cape-Verde. As well as his brother, Amílcar would have also frequented

Cape-Verdean evangelical circles in his childhood and adolescence, despite having eventually dropped out of the congregation[14]. Moreover, the adherence to Marxism of the PAIGC's leader was not dogmatic: although he used Marxist analysis, his political vision was quite pragmatic and adapted to African reality. For instance, as many African countries – including Guinea-Bissau and Cape-Verde – were scarcely industrialized and remained dependent on agriculture as their major mode of production, in Cabral's opinion the driving force of African revolution would be the peasantry rather than the urban working class (Cabral 1974, 1999).

Therefore, as I tried to demonstrate, in contemporary Guinea-Bissau evangelical churches are fostering a new politics of hope that translates Cabral's legacy in its own terms. However, this utopian impulse is projected onto a post-national horizon, fostering new belongings and allegiances outide of the logic of the nation-state (Appadurai 1996). Significantly, Cabral was against emigration, as affirmed in his speech on PAIGC's economic policy:

> [We must] reinforce surveillance at all borders, to prevent the outflow of arms which are useful to our economy. Force those who want to go outside to withdraw with their families to the liberated areas, where our forces can ensure their security and they can work and serve our people. Confiscate any assets [...] of those who insist on leaving the country. Place these goods under the Party's protection and under the people committees' management […]. Propagandize among the called refugees so as they return quickly to the country with their families and possessions [...]. Ensure the security of our production - this is an important part of our struggle for freedom, independence, and progress (Cabral 1974:46).

In Cabral's view, emigration was a loss for the country's economy, and reflected a lack of sense of responsibility for the common good of the future nation. By contrast, in contemporary urban Guinea-Bissau the decay of the African dream resulted in widespread pessimism and disillusion, reflected in the *dubria* attitude and the general eagerness to *sai fora* (go outside). In this context, Guinean evangelical believers are not immune from the common longing to escape. Indeed, Cabral's sentence on the wall of Casa Emmanuel is interpreted by Guinean evangelical migrants in quite a different sense. The idea of the "world of your dreams", rather than the image of a better nation, achieved through liberation struggle

[14] Moreover, this information was confirmed by Pastor Noel Alves, in the interview realized by Max Ruben Ramos in June 2010.

and development, is understood as an individual wish for mobility, aimed at creating belonging to the modern and "first class" world (Ferguson 2006). Yet, this position is neither comfortable nor free of tension, as I will try to prove in the following pages.

Migrant desires

A mix of personal and collective visions was also evident in the interviews I conducted with Guinean migrants of Evangelic faith living in the outskirts of Lisbon. However, in the case of the migrants, the relationship between private and collective dimensions of the future appears to be marked by a deeper tension than in the case of Evangelical believers living in Bissau. On the one hand, migration, especially that of young people, is seen as a resource for Guinea-Bissau. Pastor Eliseu, ministry of MEL, is especially committed in providing material as well as spiritual support to young Guinean migrants or children of Guinean migrants, including school support, grants, accommodation, and mediation in case of family conflicts. The efforts of Pastor Eliseu to encourage and support the movement of youth between Bissau and Lisbon is consistent with his vision about the future of Guinea-Bissau: in his view, the country will become more developed and more connected to the world, and of course it will live more in accordance with the plans of God. Interviewed after a trip to Bissau, he clarified his position about the migration of youth:

> When I arrived [in Bissau], I saw the youth standing still. Educated young people, who could be the future of this country, people with great capacity. I sometimes get so surprised to see these young people, who are struggling in hardship [...]. I believe that this coup [of 12 April 2012] will not help, neither does this transitional government have the power to change things. Because it is not an elected government [...]. It is only God who can help [...]. Because we can have our ideas, but who will make things happen is God […]. When a young man leves Guinea-Bissau, he goes back with another vision. I noticed it even in [my case]. When I arrived I had the same mindset that people have there. It's like this, we have no vision, because we are raised and indoctrinated with certain principles [...].

> That's what I'm trying to do. Now that I have got this school [which is in partnership with my church] I can help young people. To come here, or go to Brazil, or elsewhere in the world, so that they can move. I want to pull out young people [...]; to help youth from all the churches, both believers and non-believers.

On the other hand, in most interviews a difficulty in reconciling personal and family development, and the future of Guinea-Bissau emerged. In some cases, the expectations of a better future for the country are associated with longing to return to the homeland. This is the case of Daniel, student, member of MEL and son of a famous Guinean politician, who talked about his desire to go back to his motherland:

> I think that things are going to change, I hope so [...]. We are around a million and a half people and the future will be good. There will be education for everyone, Christianity will grow, because Guineans work on a Christian model, a people living in a way that a Christian can live, without any problem. In terms of government organization, I believe that governance will improve, because before there was a lot of abuse and exploitation, because there was no education for all, people were not educated and they did not realize they were being exploited. Now it is no longer the case, things have reversed. Independence was in 1974, and since then we have seen education growing. It has been very difficult, but people are increasingly seeking education. While in the past people did not want to go join the colonizers, not even to study. Many stayed in the countryside and did not want to go, they only wanted to remain living traditionally. But now things are changing, I think that if the relationship with Europe and with the world outside improves Guinea will also improve, and this will give better living conditions to Guineans [...].
>
> My desire is to return to Guinea and to work there, I have no other mission [...]. My wish is for everyone to return. Many people want to go back now. Some will perhaps have the conditions to return, because the country is growing [...] The country is to be profited at all levels, and Guineans are now educated, and many who are here are trained to work as well, many already have gained something and want to go back. I believe that in twenty years we will have a totally different country. We will have a

> country, Guinea, not based on the model that the colonizers left, which up until recently was the model for the governance of the country. A model like here, where democracy works against corruption [...]. Guineans are feeling that it is time to change now.

Among the believers I interviewed, few did not refer to the possibility of one day returning to their country of origin; Guinea-Bissau was always present in their thoughts as a future destiny. However, I met only two migrants who had realized this dream of return, and had moved to Bissau to implement business projects. In fact, plans for return are generally perceived as unrealistic due to the current situation in the country. In most cases, the believers were planning to move outside Portugal, as a result of the current crisis there. Many had already left for Northern Europe (namely Britain, France, and Germany). The plans for the future which were described were generally more focused on professional trajectories, plans to migrate and children's education, and social mobility for the nuclear family. For most people the main aspiration appears to be the education of children, it is the plan to return at home which becomes more complicated.

Nelito, in his late thirties, lives in Vale do Forno and is married with a Catholic woman belonging to his same ethnic group, the Mancanha. The couple has two young daughters. Nelito worked in construction, but when I interviewed him (in 2013) he was unemployed. His muscular and fashionable appeareance contrasts with his sentimental mood. Nelito writes poetries. To be precise, religious poems, written either in Portugues or in Kriol language, which he occasionally rants in church. When I went to his house, he prowdely showed me his poems' notebook. He stressed that before knowing the Gospel, he did not have this ability. It was only after his conversion – which occurred ten years ago in Bissau - that he started writing verses. When he composes poems, he explained, he is always inspired by God. Although his greater dream is to publish his poems, Nelito's projects are focused on the future of his daughters:

> What I want is to support my daughters until they finish their studies. This is my main project. If I keep going until they graduate, this is a big dream for me. Unless making a book of poems [...].

> I'm inclined to stay here. Because no one can now say "I want to return to Guinea". If I go back to Guinea now, what am I going to do there? There is still no work, nothing. Should I leave the good life that I have now to return to Guinea? Then I have to move back with the family, should I place them in a school where they speak Kriol? No, only when my daughters are grown up can I decide. If they are already making their own living, then I can go [...]. Not now, it does not enter my head. That thought is far off. Now if I get another job, I will leave to work [...]. I'm trying to write [to my friends] in other countries [in order to get a job]. I've written in Luxembourg, I'm already waiting.

In one way or another, the migrants that I met shared common problems: how to continue their life in the future, and where to imagine their future? How to build a horizon of collective future, under conditions of geographical dispersion? How to produce the future in a context where the bonds with the motherland are losing strength and value, while the relationships with the surrounding society are challenging, due to the social segregation and stigmatization of migrants at a local level? Taking into account these problems, it is not surprising that the expectations of Evangelical Guineans living in the diaspora are mainly focused on the horizon of the individual and his or her nuclear family. The ideas of my migrant interlocutors about the future seem in line with what James Ferguson has called a shift from a utopian to an "aspirational" political space in contemporary Africa (Ferguson 2006:223). To the extent that the nationalist projects of alternative modernization have failed, and the growth of a new global economy has deepened the marginalization of most African countries, people are turnig to new strategies through which to secure their own futures. And these strategies, Ferguson argues, are increasingly focused on spatial mobility:

> On thing tha seems to come up all over the continent in recent years is a shift from a focus on temporal dymanics of societal progress toward a new reliance on individual spatial mobility. How is one to escape the low global status of being 'a poor African'? Not through 'patience' and the progress of national or societal development, but by leaving, going elsewere, even in the face of terrible danger […]. Today, anthropological fieldworkers in Africa tend to be asked not, 'What can you do for us?' (that time-honored question), but, 'How can I get out of this place?' Not progress, then, but egress (Ferguson 2006:191).

However, the social projects of MEL, both in Vale do Forno and Bissau, show the church's efforts to found a collective life, both in the diaspora and in the motherland. In this sense, Evangelical churches in Bissau and Lisbon seem to combine two kinds of future-making stategies: one focused on locality and one centered on mobility; one promoting collective hope and one supporting individual aspirations to a better life. While the churches in Bissau appear as closer to the "utopian pole" of this dialectic, the congregations in Lisbon tend toward the "aspirational pole". In particular, MEL helps their members to maintain their bonds with Bissau and create a sense of place in Vale do Forno. MEL also provides members who are moving abroad with points of reference, through its transnational networks. For instance, when a believer move to another country, as common among Evangelical churches MEL's leaders provide him/her with a recommendation letter wherein his/her Evangelical affiliation is certified. This sort of "safe-conduct" will be delivered to the ministers of the new congregation that the travelling believer wants to join[15]. Hence, MEL's transnational networks offer connections, shelters and familiar spaces to believers in their movements. If, as argued by Appadurai, risk is one of the hallmarks of the present global time, these religious transnational networks are particularly important for migrant people who "do not stake everything on an increasingly risky future in a single nation" (Clifford 1997: 256). In one way, MEL is a centripetal force, anchoring members to the local, while also acting as a centrifugal force that encourages migrants to pursue their personal projects.

Today, both involvement in Evangelical churches and migration are factors of "disembedding" that separate people from local bonds. However, while also being agents of disconnection, through their global networks and their localized social action Evangelical churches are helping people to reconnect to social attachments and reconstruct a collective dimension of the future.

[15] A sample of this letter, written by Pastor Eliseu for is provided in the appendix 2.

Conclusion

My dissertation started with a journey in time and space, whereby I introduced the reader to the context of origin of Guinean Evangelical migrants living in Greater Lisbon. In the first chapter I outlined the collective trajectory of the Evangelical minority in Guinea-Bissau, setting it against the background of the recent history of the country. In the second and in the third chapter, I analysed the motivations that led my interlocutors and their families to reject their previous affiliations and to embrace a universal religion of foreign origin.

Then, I moved to the Greater Lisbon setting, entering into the heart of my subject of study, that is, the ethnography of MEL as an emblematic example of an African Church located in a suburb of a European city. In the fourth, fifth and sixth chapters I developed my central argument: by providing a set of material, social and symbolic benefits, the Evangelical faith gives MEL's believers a manner to deal with their everyday problems and make sense of the world in which they live. On the one hand, through its transnational networks MEL provides believers who travel from Guinea-Bissau to and across Europe with important points of reference. Hence, MEL's transnational networks offer connections, shelters and familiar spaces to congregants in their movements, enabling them to deal with an uncertain future. On the other hand, by involving worshippers in missionary and social work in the neighbourhood, MEL anchor its members to the local dimension. Furthermore, thanks to a constant process of self-transformation and collective revitalization, the affiliation to MEL turns its members from migrants to missionaries in a heathen land. The empowering effects of this religious experience are evident in the interweaving of symbolic capital and a mapping of the world that enables believers to deal with a life in motion, as well as to inhabit and reshape the urban space where they dwell.

The combination of advantages provided by the adherence to the Evangelical religion is condensed in the polysemic notion of *bênção* (blessing). The concept of blessing is associated with the actions of giving and receiving and with the connected notion of gift. From a doctrinal point of view, the act of giving must be related to the theological category of grace, that is, a spontaneous and undeserved gift from God to the believer, taking the form of divine love and eternal salvation, but also material wellbeing in this world. In this view, God

is thought of as analogous to a human father, who provide care and protection for his children. At the same time, blessing is the outcome of brotherly love, whose primary field of action is the church. For instance, when Pastor Saline exhorted his flock to participate in the recurrent collections of food for the neediest families in the congregation, he used to say "let's bless our brothers and sisters" (*abençoamos os nossos irmãos e as nossas irmãs*) with what we can give them, even just a bag of rice or a packet of sugar". As I was attending the church's activities, people used to call me *abençoada* (blessed), a common appellation given to worshippers. When I asked Eliseu the meaning of this word, he said that I was *abençoada* because, although I was a migrant mother in a foreign land, God was safeguarding my life. In this sense, *abençoada* was at the same time a statement of belonging and a "performative act" (Austin 1962), aimed at eliciting God's favour and protection.

Finally, the seventh chapter led me to return to my starting point and analyse the multiple ways in which Evangelical Guinean believers are engaged in imagining, thinking and producing their future. Although this latter topic has been developed with reference both to Guinea-Bissau and Portugal, the ethnographical material collected in Bissau has undoubtedly a prominent role in the concluding pages of my dissertation. I think that this "return to the roots" makes sense in the portrait of a diasporic community like MEL. As many authors have shown, ambivalence is the hallmark of the contemporary migrant condition: on the one hand, thanks to the networks that cross national borders, migrants are increasingly able to live "double lives" between their homeland and their host land. On the other hand, the dark side of this dual belonging is nostalgia. Either as an asset, a nefarious bondage or a sense of lack, the link with the *tchon* (land) is a central element in the lives of Evangelical Guinean migrants. This enduring tie is reflected in migrants' plans for return, although the persistent conditions of political and economic crisis in the homeland may turn these projects into impossible dreams.

I introduced this dissertation with a brief description of the historical context in which my research took place, that is, the financial crisis that affected Portugal, as well as other countries, in the age of late capitalism. Having described how a diasporic Evangelical community responded to this crisis, as well as to other more specific challenges that its members are encountering in their everyday life, I return to the same broader topic. Under the blows of the financial crisis of the last decade, "the liberal social contract of Western

modernity" (Appadurai 1996: 42) has shown its failures, if any need there was to. The era of late capitalism has brought to light the most radical contradictions of the neoliberal ideology and political-economic system, and its true nature of "counter-revolution" (Formenti 2013) or "class struggle from above" (Gallino 2012).

Despite their display of force nation-states, both in Africa and in Europe, are retreating and giving up parts of their sovereignty. On the one hand, European states show their muscles at their borders by repressing migration movements from the global south. On the other, they are constantly manipulated and controlled from above by the various troikas, rating agencies and neoliberal international organizations, for which there are no borders. Concurringly, the daily practices of individual migrants, as well as the actions of diasporic public spheres of various kinds, are constantly challenging the boundaries of nation-states. Among these heterogeneous public spheres, Evangelical and Pentecostal communities are incessantly emerging, building connections and religious networks that transcend national boundaries. These churches work as substitutes for the state in the "grey zones" whose inhabitants have been reduced to "bare life" (Piot 2010), both in Africa and in Europe. In Africa, neoliberal global policies have led states to withdraw from the social field. In Europe, national migration laws, social exclusion and ostracizing public discourses have relegated many African migrants in spaces of marginality, lack of rights and "reduced citizenship". In the case of Guinea-Bissau, Evangelical churches – similarly to other religious organizations and NGOs - are among the few institutions taking over from the state in the provision of social services. At the same time, as I showed in the seventh chapter, they are fostering a new politics of hope that translates Amílcar Cabral's legacy in their own terms. Likewise, Evangelical congregations attended by Guinean migrants in Portugal are providing their members with a set of material, social and symbolical resources that enable believers to deal with their condition of marginality and to keep struggling for a better life. In this sense, Evangelical churches are nurturing a kind of spiritual utopia, which is, in Ernst Bloch's terms, an expressions of the human tension towards a "good new" (Bloch 1986). Concurringly, and especially in the diaspora, these churches create spaces that can be called "heterotopic" (Bochow and van Dijk 2012), where counter-stories in contrast with hostile labelling and social marginalization may emerge. We may not share their values and worldviews, but we

should recognize their actions of resilience against weak, corrupt and inhospitable states, as well as against the “principalities of darkness” (Marshall 2009) that dominate all of us.

Glossary

Abota: self-help system, consisting in the collection and redistribution of funds within a group of peers.

Deus: God, Supreme Being.

Djambacoss: diviner and traditional healer.

Fanado: male circumcision.

Iran: spirit of the land.

Grumete: African auxiliary, seaman and longshoreman who worked for lançados and adopted Luso-African ways.

Kriston: literally "Christian". However, this term is less a religious than a social category, identifying the inhabitant of the *praça*, where a Creole society developed over time, and where Christianization coexists with enduring animistic practices.

Lançado: Portuguese and Cape Verdean trader who had 'thrown' himself upon the indigenous population and was living in African villages.

Mesinhu: Bissau-Guinean medicinal plants

Mûro: diviner and traditional healer in the local Muslim tradition.

Parentasco: kin.

Pekadur: person (litterally "sinner").

Praça: originally Creole fortified village, today synonym of urban centre.

Sai fora: to emigrate (litterally “to go out”).

Tabanca: village.

Tchon: land, land of origin.

Tchon-tchama: literally “the land calls”. It means a mystical call from home, enacted either by elder relatives or ancestors to migrants living abroad. Trough *tchon-tchama*, ancestors would cause psychological distress, incurable disease and misfortune, urging their son or daughter to perform specific ceremonies at home.

Tera: land, country of origin.

Torna-boka: ritual practice performed in a shrine.

Vison: vision.

References

Abranches, Maria 2012. «When People Stay and Things Make Their Way: Airports, Mobilities and Materialities of a Transnational Landscape». Mobilities 8(4): 506–527.

Achebe, Chinua 1996. Things Fall Apart. Heinemann.

Adogame, Afe 1998. «A Home Away from Home: The Proliferation of the Celestial Church of Christ (CCC) in Diaspora-Europe». Exchange 27(2): 141–160.
2004. «Engaging the Rhetoric of Spiritual Warfare: The Public Face of Aladura in Diaspora». Journal of Religion in Africa 34(4): 493–522.

Agamben, Giorgio 1995. Homo Sacer: il potere sovrano e la nuda vita. Torino: Einaudi.
2000. Il tempo che resta: un commento alla Lettera ai Romani. Torino: Bollati Boringhieri.
2008. State of Exception. University of Chicago Press.

Amselle, Jean-Loup 2005. Branchements : Anthropologie de l'universalité des cultures. Paris: Flammarion.

Anderson, Allan Heaton 2013. An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity. Cambridge University Press.

Anderson, Benedict 2006. Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism. Verso.

Apel, Karl-Otto 2000. La controverse expliquer-comprendre: une approche pragmatico-transcendantale. Cerf.

Appadurai, Arjun 1988. The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective. Cambridge University Press.
1996. Modernity At Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization. Univerity of Minnesota

Press.
2013. The Future as Cultural Fact: Essays on the Global Condition. Verso Books.

Ardner, Edwin 1987. On Remote Areas: Some Theoretical Considerations. *In* Anthropology at Home. Anthony Jackson, ed. Tavistock Publications.

Asad, Talal 1983. «Anthropological Conceptions of Religion: Reflections on Geertz». Man 18(2): 237.
1993. The Construction of Religion as an Anthropological Category. *In* Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam Pp. 27–54.

Augé, Marc, and Claudine Herzlich 1983. Le Sens du mal. Anthropologie, histoire, sociologie de la maladie. Paris: Editions des archives contemporaines.

Austin, John Langshaw 1962. How to do things with words. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

De Barros, Miguel 2012. «A sociedade civil face ao processo de democratização e o desenvolvimento na guiné-bissau (1991-2011)». Africana Studia 18: 37–47.

Bastos, Cristiana 2009. O Medo Dos Imigrantes. *In* Migração, saúde, e diversidade cultural. Elsa Lechner, ed. Lisboa: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais.

Bayart, Jean-François 1989. L'Etat en Afrique. La politique du ventre. Paris: Fayard.

Bayart, Jean-François, Stephen Ellis, and Béatrice Hibou 1999. The criminalization of the state in Africa. Bloomington: The International African Institute in association with J. Currey, Oxford: Indiana University Press.

Beneduce, Roberto 2004. Frontiere dell'identità e della memoria. Etnopsichiatria e migrazioni in un mondo creolo. Milano: FrancoAngeli.

Benhabib, Seyla 1992. Situating the Self: Gender, Community, and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics. Psychology Press.

Billman, Herbert 1951. «Primeiro relatório anual dos trabalhos da missão evangélica no tratamento da lepra na província da guiné portuguesa». Boletim Cultural Da Guiné Portuguesa 6 (23).

Le Blanc, Guillaume 2010. Dedans, dehors: la condition d'étranger. Paris: Editions du Seuil.

Blanes, Ruy Llera 2006. «The Atheist Anthropologist: Believers and Non-Believers in Anthropological fieldwork1». Social Anthropology 14(2): 223–234.
2008. Os Alleluias. Ciganos Evengélicos E Música. Lisboa: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais.
2011. «Double Presence: Proselytism and Belonging in an Angolan Prophetic Church». Journal of Religion in Europe 4(3): 409–428.

Blanes, Ruy, and José Mapril, eds. 2013. Sites and Politics of Religious Diversity in Southern Europe: The Best of All Gods. BRILL.

Bloch, Ernst 1986. The Principle of Hope. Basil Blackwell.

Bochow, Astrid, and Rijk Van Dijk 2012. «Christian Creations of New Spaces of Sexuality, Reproduction, and Relationships». *In* Africa: Exploring Faith and Religious Heterotopia: A Special Issue of the. Journal of Religion in Africa 42(4): 325–344.

Bonanate, Ugo 1994. Nascita di una religione: Le origini del cristianesimo. Torino: Bollati Boringhieri.

Bordonaro, Lorenzo 2009. «Sai Fora: Youth, Disconnectedness and Aspiration to Mobility in the Bijagó Islands (Guinea-Bissau) ». Etnografica 13(1): 125–144.
2010. «Modernity as Marginality: The Making and the Experience of Peripherality in the

Bijagó Islands (Guinea-Bissau) ». Cadernos de Estudos Africanos (18/19): 117–137.

Bordonaro, Lorenzo, and Clara Carvalho 2010. «Introduction». Cadernos de Estudos Africanos (18/19): 9–18.

Bordonaro, Lorenzo Ibrahim, and Chiara Pussetti 2006. Da utopia da migração à nostalgia dos migrantes: percursos migratorios entre Bubaque (Guiné Bissau) e Lisboa. *In* Terrenos metropolitanos: ensaios sobre produção etnográfica. Antónia de Lima and Ramon Sarró, ed. Pp. 125–154.

Bourdieu, Pierre 1985. The Forms of Social Capital. *In* Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education Pp. 241–258. New York: Greenwood Press.
2004. Preface. *In* The Suffering of the Immigrant. Wiley.

Brooks, George E. 1990. «Notas genealógicas de preminentes familias luso-africanas no seculo XIX na Guiné». Soronda: 53–71.
1993. Landlords and Strangers: Ecology, Society, and Trade in Western Africa, 1000-1630. Westview Press.
2003. Eurafricans in Western Africa: Commerce, Social Status, Gender, and Religious Observance from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century. James Currey Publishers.

Bruijn, Mirjam de, and Rijk van Dijk, 2012b. Introduction. *In* The Social Life of Connectivity in Africa Pp. 1–19. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
2012a. The Social Life of Connectivity in Africa. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Burridge, Kenelm 2014. Mambu: A Melanesian Millennium. Princeton University Press.

Cabral, Amílcar 1974. P.A.I.G.C.: unidade e luta. Nova Aurora.

Cannell, Fenella 2006a. The Anthropology of Christianity. Duke University Press.
2006b. Introduction. *In* The Anthropology of Christianity. Duke University Press.

Carvalho, Clara 2001. «De Paris a Jeta, de Jeta a Paris. Percursos migratórios e ritos terapêuticos entre França e a Guiné-Bissau». Etnográfica 5 (2): 285-302.

Carvalho, Rita Almeida de 2013. A Concordata de Salazar. Lisboa: Circulo dos Leitores.

Casanova, José 1994. Public Religions in the Modern World. University of Chicago Press.

La Cecla, Franco La 1997. Il malinteso: antropologia dell'incontro. Bari: Laterza.

Chabal, Patrick 1983. Amílcar Cabral: Revolutionary Leadership and People's War. CUP Archive.

Chidester, David, and Edward Tabor Linenthal 1995. American Sacred Space. Indiana University Press.

Clifford, James 1997. Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century. Harvard University Press.

Cohen, Robin 2008. Global Diasporas: An Introduction. Routledge.

Cole, Jennifer 2010. Sex and Salvation: Imagining the Future in Madagascar. University of Chicago Press.

Coleman, Simon 2000. The Globalisation of Charismatic Christianity. Spreading the Gospel of Prosperity. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Coleman, Simon, and Katrin Maier 2013. «Redeeming the City: Creating and Traversing "London-Lagos."». Religion 43(3): 53–364.

Comaroff, Jean, and John L.Comaroff 1986. «Christianity and Colonialism in South Africa».

American Ethnologist 13(1): 1–22.
1991. Of Revelation and Revolution, Volume 1: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa. University of Chicago Press.
1993. Modernity and Its Malcontents: Ritual and Power in Postcolonial Africa. University of Chicago Press.
1997. Of Revelation and Revolution, Volume 2: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier. University of Chicago Press.
2000. «Millennial Capitalism: First Thoughts on a Second Coming». Public Culture 12(2): 291–343.
2004. Notes on Afromodernity and the Neo World Order: An Afterword. *In* Producing African Futures: Ritual and Reproduction in a Neoliberal Age. BRILL.

Corten, Andre, and Ruth R. Marshall-Fratani 2001. Between Babel and Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America. Indiana University Press.

Costa Dias, Eduardo 1999. «Protestantismo e proselitismo na guiné-bissau reflexões sobre o insucesso do proselitismo no oio e na província leste». Lusotopie: 309–318.
2002. «Guiné-Bissau entre a tabanca e o estado de direito – para quando a estabilização política? » Seara Nova 77: 47–49.

Cox, James Leland, and Gerrie ter Haar 2003. Uniquely African? *In* African Christian Identity from Cultural and Historical Perspectives. Africa World Press.

Crapanzano, Vincent 1986. Waiting: The Whites of South Africa. Vintage Books.
2001. Serving the Word: Literalism in America from the Pulpit to the Bench. New Press.
2003. «Reflections on Hope as a Category of Social and Psychological Analysis». Cultural Anthropology 18(1): 3–32.

Crews, Mickey 1990. The Church of God: A Social History. Univ. of Tennessee Press.

Crowley, Eve 1994. Contracts with the Spirits: Religion, Asylum, and Ethnic Identity in the

Cacheu Region of Guinea-Bissau. Yale University.
2000. Institutions, Identities, and the Incorporation of Immigrants within Local Frontiers of the Upper Guinea Coast. *In* Migrations Anciennes et Peuplement Actuel Des Côtes Guinéennes. Gérard Gaillard, ed. Pp. 115–138. Paris: l'Harmattan.

Cruz e Silva, Teresa 2001. Protestant Churches and the Formation of Political Consciousness in Southern Mozambique (1930-1974). Basileia: P. Schlettwein Publishing.
2004. «Identidade Religiosa E Construção Da Democracia Em Moçambique: O Caso Da Igreja Metodista Unida de Moçambique». Travessias 4-5: 223–235.

Csordas, Thomas J. 1994. Embodiment and Experience: The Existential Ground of Culture and Self. Cambridge University Press.
1997. The Sacred Self: A Cultural Phenomenology of Charismatic Healing. University of California Press.
2002. Body/Meaning/Healing. Palgrave Macmillan.

Davies, Evan 2012. Whatever Happened to CT Studd's Mission? Lessons from the History of WEC International. Bulstrode: WEC Publications.

Dix, Steffen 2008. «Roman Catholicism and Religious Pluralities in Portuguese (Iberian) History». Journal of Religion in Europe 1(1): 60–84.
2009. «Religious Plurality within a Catholic Tradition: A Study of the Portuguese Capital, Lisbon, and a Brief Comparison with Mainland Portugal». Religion 39(2). Perspectives on Religion in Western Europe: 182–193.

Djaló, Tcherno 2012. O Mestiço E O Poder: Identidades, Dominações E Resistências Na Guiné. Lisboa: Vega.

Duarte Silva, António E. 2010. Invenção E Construção Da Guiné-Bissau (Administração Colonial/Nacionalismo/Constitucionalismo). Coimbra: Edições Almedina.

Dumont, Louis 1980. Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and Its Implications. University of Chicago Press.
1992. Essays on Individualism: Modern Ideology in Anthropological Perspective. University of Chicago Press.

Ecclestone, Kathryn, and John Field 2003. «Promoting Social Capital in a "Risk Society": A New Approach to Emancipatory Learning or a New Moral Authoritarianism?» British Journal of Sociology of Education 24(3): 267–282.

Einarsdottir, Jonina 2005. Tired of Weeping: Mother Love, Child Death, and Poverty in Guinea-Bissau. Univ. of Wisconsin Press.

Eisenstadt, Shmuel Noah 2000. Multiple Modernities. Transaction Publishers.

Engelke, Mattew, and Joel Robbins 2010. «Global Christianity, Global Critique». South Atlantic Quarterly 109(4).

Evens, T. M. S. (Terry), and Don Handelman 2006. The Manchester School: Practice and Ethnographic Praxis in Anthropology. Berghahn Books.

Fancello, Sandra, and André Mary 2010. Introduction. *In* Chétiens africains en Europe. Paris: Karthala.

Fassin, Didier 2001. «The Biopolitics of Otherness: Undocumented Foreigners and Racial Discrimination in French Public Debate». Anthropology Today 17(1): 3–7.

Feld, Steven, and Keith H. Basso 1996. Senses of Place. School of American Research, Santa Fe.

Ferguson, James 1999. Expectations of Modernity Myths and Meanings of Urban Life on the Zambian Copperbelt. Berkeley: University of California Press.

2006. Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Fernandes, Raúl Mendes Jr. 1993. «Partido Único E Poderes Tradicionais». Soronda 16: 39–50.
1994. «O Processo Democrático Na Guiné-Bissau». Soronda 17: 18–27.

Formenti, Ambra 2007. «Chiese Pentecostali Africane a Torino». Afriche E Orienti 9(3-4): 101–115.

Formenti, Carlo 2013. Utopie letali. Capitalismo senza democrazia. Jaca Book.

Forrest, Joshua 2003. Lineages of State Fragility: Rural Civil Society in Guinea-Bissau. Athens OH: Ohio Univ Press.

Foucault, Michel 1998. Archivio Foucault. Interventi, colloqui, interviste. Milano: Feltrinelli.

Foucault, Michel 2003. "Society Must Be Defended": Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-1976. St Martins Press.

Gable, Eric 1995. «The Decolonization of Consciousness: Local Skeptics and the "will to Be Modern" in a West African Village». American Ethnologist 22(2): 242–257.

Gaillard, Gérald 2002. Islam et Vie Politique En Guiné-Bissau Contemporaine. *In* L'Afrique Politique. Paris: Kartala et Cean.

Gale, Richard 2005. «Representing the City: Mosques and the Planning Process in Birmingham». Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies 31(6): 1161–1179.

Garbin, David 2013. «The Visibility and Invisibility of Migrant Faith in the City: Diaspora Religion and the Politics of Emplacement of Afro-Christian Churches». Journal of Ethnic and

Migration Studies 39(5): 677–696.

Gardner, Katy 2008. «Keeping Connected: Security, Place, and Social Capital in a "Londoni" Village in Sylhet». Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute 14(3): 477–495.
2012. Discordant Development: Global Capitalism and the Struggle for Connection in Bangladesh. London: Pluto Press.

Geertz, Clifford 1973. The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays. Basic Books.
1974. «"From the Native's Point of View": On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding». Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences 28(1): 26.
2005. «Shifting Aims, Moving Targets: On the Anthropology of Religion». Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute 11(1): 1–15.

Giddens, Anthony 1991. The Consequences of Modernity. Stanford University Press.

Gilroy, Paul 1993. The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness. Verso.

Gluckman, Max 1958. Analysis of a Social Situation in Modern Zululand, vol.28. Rhodes-Livingstone Paper. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
1961. «Ethnographic Data in British Social Anthropology». The Sociological Review 9(1): 5–17.
2006. Ethnographic Data in British Social Anthropology. *In* The Manchester School: Practice and Ethnographic Praxis in Anthropology. T. M. S. (Terry) Evens and Don Handelman, eds. Pp. 13–23. Berghahn Books.

Gonçalves, José Júlio 1960. Protestantismo em África: Contribuição para o estudo do protestantismo na África portuguesa. Lisboa: Junta de Investigações de Ultramar.

Grassi, Marzia 2003. Rabidantes: Comércio Espontâneo Transnacional Em Cabo Verde. Lisboa: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais.

Gupta, Akhil, and James Ferguson 1992. «Beyond "Culture": Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference». Cultural Anthropology 7(1): 6–23.

Guyer, Jane I. 2007. «Prophecy and the near Future: Thoughts on Macroeconomic, Evangelical, and Punctuated Time». American Ethnologist 34(3): 409–421.

Habermas, Jürgen 1987. The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Hannerz, Ulf 1996. Transnational Connections: Culture, People, Places. Psychology Press.

Harding, Susan Friend 2001. The Book of Jerry Falwell: Fundamentalist Language and Politics. Princeton University Press.

Hardt, Professor Michael, and Antonio Negri 2009. Empire. Harvard University Press.

Harvey, David 1990. The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change. Wiley-Blackwell.
2001. Spaces of Capital: Towards a Critical Geography. New York: Routledge.
2005. A Brief History of Neoliberalism. Oxford University Press.

Havik, Philip J. 2004. Silences and Soundbites: The Gendered Dynamics of Trade and Brokerage in the Pre-Colonial Guinea Bissau Region. LIT Verlag Münster.

Hibou, Béatrice 1999. The "Social Capital" of the State as an Agent of Deception. *In* The Criminalization of the State in Africa pp. 69–113.

Hobsbawm, Eric, and Terence O. Ranger 1992. The Invention of Tradition. Cambridge University Press.

Horton, Robin 1971. «African Conversion». Africa 41(02): 85–108.

Jenkins, Philip 2006. The New Faces of Christianity : Believing the Bible in the Global South: Believing the Bible in the Global South. Oxford University Press.
2011. The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity. Oxford University Press.

Kamp, Linda Joanne 2011. Violent Conversion: Brazilian Pentecostalism and the Urban Pioneering of Women in Mozambique. Vrije Universiteit.

Karp, Ivan 2002. Development and Personhood: Tracing the Contours of a Moral Discourse. *In* Critically Modern: Alternatives, Alterities, Anthropologies. Bruce M. Knauft, ed. Indiana University Press.

King, Russell 2000. Southern Europe in the Changing Global Map of Migration. *In* Eldorado Or Fortress? Migration in Southern Europe. Palgrave Macmillan.

King, Russell, Gabriella Lazaridis, and Charalampos G. Tsardanidēs, eds. 2000. Eldorado Or Fortress?: Migration in Southern Europe. Palgrave Macmillan.

Klein, Naomi 2007. «Disaster Capitalism». Harper's Magazine 315: 47–58.

Klimt, Andrea, and Stephen Lubkemann 2002. «Argument across the Portuguese-Speaking World: A Discursive Approach to Diaspora». Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies 11(2): 145–162.

Knibbe, Kim 2009. « "We Did Not Come Here as Tenants, but as Landlords": Nigerian Pentecostals and the Power of Maps». African Diaspora 2(2): 133–158.

Knibbe, Kim, and Marten van der Meulen 2009. «The Role of Spatial Practices and Locality in the Constituting of the Christian». African Diaspora 2(2): 125–130.

Knörr, Jacqueline, and Wilson Trajano Filho, eds. 2010. The Powerful Presence of the Past:

Integration and Conflict Along the Upper Guinea Coast. BRILL.

Knott, Kim 2005. The Location of Religion: A Spatial Analysis. Equinox Pub.
2010. «Religion, Space, and Place: The Spatial Turn in Research on Religion». Religion and Society: Advances in Research 1(1): 29–43.

Kopytoff, Igor 1987. The African Frontier: The Reproduction of Traditional African Societies. Indiana University Press.

Koudawo, Fafali 2001. Cabo- Verde E Guiné- Bissau: Da Democracia Revolucionária À Democracia Liberal, vol.Vol. 14. Colecção Kacu Martel. Bissau: Instituto Nacional de Estudo e Pesquisa.

Lecuona, Maurício de Oliveira 1966. «Luta contra a lepra na Guiné». Boletim Cultural Da Guiné Portuguesa 81: 45–65.

Lefebvre, Henri 1992. The Production of Space. Oxford, OX, UK; Cambridge, Mass., USA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude 1950. Introduction à l'œuvre de Marcel Mauss. *In* Sociologie et Anthropologie. Paris: PUF.

Lewis, Michael 2007. «In Nature's Casino». The New York Times, August 26. http://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/26/magazine/26neworleans-t.html, accessed April 1, 2014.

Lima, Antónia Pedroso de, and Ramon Sarró, eds. 2006. Terrenos Metropolitanos. Ensaios sobre produção etnográfica. Lisboa: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais.

Lima, Ernesto 2007. O Evangelho de Cristo na Guiné-Bissau. Dos primórdios aos nossos dias. Lisboa: Publidisa.

Low, Setha M., and Denise Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003. Locating Culture. *In* The Anthropology of Space and Place: Locating Culture. Setha M. Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga, eds. Pp. 1–47. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Lund, Christian 2010. «The Ethics of Fruitful Misunderstanding». Journal of Research Practice 10(2).
2014. «Of What Is This a Case?: Analytical Movements in Qualitative Social Science Research». Human Organization 73(3): 224–234.

Macamo, Elisio Salvado 2005. Negotiating Modernity: Africa's Ambivalent Experience. Zed Books.

MacDonald, Mary N., ed. 2003. Experiences of Place. Cambridge: MA: Harvard University Press.

Machado, Fernando Luís 1998. «Da Guiné-Bissau a Portugal: Luso-Guineenses e imigrantes». Sociologia, Problemas e Práticas 26: 9–56.
2002. Contrastes e continuidades. Migração, etnicidade e integração dos guineenses em Portugal. Oeiras: Celta Editora.

MacIntyre, Alasdair 1970. Is Understanding Religion Compatible with Believing? *In* Rationality Pp. 110–3.

Mafra, Clara 2002. Na Posse Da Palavra. Religiao, Conversao E Liberdade Pessoal Em Dois Contextos Nacionais. Lisboa: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais.

Malheiros, Jorge 2002. Urban Restructuring, Immigration and the Generation of Marginalized Spaces in the Lisbon Region. *In* Immigration and Place in Mediterranean Metropolises. Maria Lucinda Fonseca, Jorge Malheiros, Natalia Ribas-Mateos, Paul White, and Alina Esteves, eds. Pp. 207–232. Lisbon: Luso-American Foundation.

Malinowski, Bronislaw 2014. Argonauts of the Western Pacific. Routledge.

Mamdani, Mahmood 1996. Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism. Princeton University Press.

Mapril, José 2012. Islão e transnacionalismo: uma etnografia entre Portugal e o Bangladeche. Lisboa: Instituto Ciências Sociais.

Marshall, Ruth 2009. Political Spiritualities: The Pentecostal Revolution in Nigeria. University of Chicago Press.

De Martino, Ernesto 1948. Il mondo magico, prolegomeni a una storia del magismo. Torino: Einaudi.

Mary, André 1998. «Retour Sur La "Conversion Africaine": Horton, Peel et Les Autres». Journal Des Africanistes 68(1): 11–20.

Mauss, Marcel 1967. The Gift. New York: Norton.

Mbembe, Achille 1988. Afriques indociles. Paris: Karthala.
2001. On the Postcolony. University of California Press.
2006. On Politics as a Form of Expenditure. *In* Law and Disorder in the Postcolony. Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, eds. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Meulen, Marten van der 2009. «The Continuing Importance of the Local. African Churches and the Search for Worship Space in Amsterdam». African Diaspora 2(2): 159–181.

Meyer, Birgit 1998. « "Make a Complete Break with the Past." Memory and Post-Colonial Modernity in Ghanaian Pentecostalist Discourse». Journal of Religion in Africa 28(3): 316–349.

Meyer, Birgit, and Peter Geschiere 1999. Introduction. *In* Globalization and Identity: Dialectics of Closure and Flow Pp. 1–15. Oxford: Blackwell.

Miller, Daniel 1994. Modernity as a General Property. *In* Modernity : An Ethnographic Approach. Dualism and Mass Consumption in Trinidad Pp. 58–81. Oxford: Berg.

Minkowski, Eugène 1970. Lived Time: Phenomenological and Psychopathological Studies. Northwestern University Press.

Mitchell, Clyde 2006. Case and Situation Analysis. *In* The Manchester School: Practice and Ethnographic Praxis in Anthropology. Berghahn Books.

Moltmann, Jürgen 1967. Theology of Hope: On the Grounds and Implications of a Christian Escatology. SCM Press. London.
1970. Theology as Eschatology. *In* The Future of Hope: Theology as Eschatology. F. Herzog, ed. Pp. 1–50. New York: Herder and Herder.

Morgado, Nuno Alves 1959. Província Da Guiné – Censo Da População de 1950 – Vol. I População Civilizada. Lisboa: Centro de Estudos Políticos e Sociais.

Mosko, Mark 2010. «Partible Penitents: Dividual Personhood and Christian Practice in Melanesia and the West». Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute 16(2): 215–240.

Mota, Avelino Teixeira 1954. Guiné Portuguesa. Lisboa: Agência Geral do Ultramar, Divisão de Publicações e Biblioteca.

Mudimbe, Valentin-Yves. 1988. The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge. Indiana University Press.

Ngoenha, S. E. 1999. «Os missionários suíços face ao nacionalismo moçambicano: Entre a tsonganidade e a moçambicanidade: Dynamiques religieuses en lusophonie contemporaine».

Lusotopie: 596–597.

Obono, Oka, and Koblowe Obono 2010. Ajala Travel: Mobility and Connections as Forms of Social Capital in Nigerian Society. *In* The Social Life of Connectivity in Africa Pp. 227–241. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ong, Aihwa 1999. Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality. Duke University Press.

Paredes, Margarida 2010. «Deolinda Rodrigues, da Família Metodista à Família MPLA, o Papel da Cultura na Política». Cadernos de Estudos Africanos(20): 11–26.

Peel, J. D. Y. 1968. «Syncretism and Religious Change». Comparative Studies in Society and History: 121–141.
1977. «Conversion and Tradition in Two African Societies: Ijebu and Buganda». Past and Present: 108–141.
1990. «The Pastor and the Babalawo: The Interaction of Religions in Nineteenth-Century Yorubaland». Africa 60(03): 338–369.
2003. Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba. Indiana University Press.

Pélissier, René 1997. História Da Guiné: Portugueses E Africanos Na Senegâmbia, 1841-1936, 2 Vols. Lisboa: Editorial Estampa.

Pian, Anaik 2008. «Le " tuteur-logeur" revisité : le "thiaman" sénégalais, passeur de frontières du maroc vers l'europe». Politique africaine 109.

Pina Cabral, João de 2006. Reflexoes finais. *In* Terrenos metropolitanos. Ensaios sobre produção etnográfica. Antónia de Lima and Ramon Sarró, ed. Pp. 177–191. Lisboa: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais.

Piot, Charles 1999. Remotely Global: Village Modernity in West Africa. Chicago: University

of Chicago Press.
2010. Nostalgia for the Future West Africa after the Cold War. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Porqueres i Gené, Enric 2009a. Individu et Personne à La Lumiere Des Nouveaux Contextes de La Parente. *In* Défis Contemporains de La Parenté. Enric Porqueres i Gené, ed. Paris: Editions de l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales.
2009b. Défis contemporains de la parenté. Paris: Editions de l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales.

Portes, Alejandro, and Patricia Landtold 1996. «The Downside of Social Capital». The American 2(3).

Pratt, Mary Louise 2003. Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation. Routledge.

Prete, A. 1992. Nostalgia: storia di un sentimento. Raffaello Cortina Editore.

Pussetti, Chiara 2005. Poetica delle emozioni: i Bijagó della Guinea Bissau. Laterza.

Quintino, Maria Celeste Rogado 2004. Migrações e etnicidade em terrenos portugueses: Guineenses--estratégias de invenção de uma comunidade. Universidade Técnica de Lisboa, Instituto Superior de Ciências Sociais e Políticas.

Reis, Bruno Cardoso 2006. Salazar E O Vaticano. Lisboa: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais.

Rema, Henrique Pinto 1982. História Das Missões Católicas Da Guiné. Braga: Editorial Franciscana.

Rey, Jeanne 2010. A La Conquete Des Nations (Unies): Combat Spirituel, Millénarisme et Internationalization. *In* Chrétiens Africains En Europe. Paris: Karthala.

Robbins, Joel 2004. Becoming Sinners: Christianity and Moral Torment in a Papua New Guinea Society. University of California Press.

Rodney, Walter 1970. A History of the Upper Guinea Coast 1541-1800. Clarendon Press.

Rosa Mendes, Pedro 2001. «Guiné: A Ditadura Dos Incompetentes». Público, April 3: 16–17.

Safran, William 1991. «Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return». Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies 1(1): 83–99.

Salgueiro, Barata Teresa 1977. «Bairros Clandestinos Na Periferia de Lisboa». Finisterra 12(23): 28–53.
1983. «Mercado de Habitaçao E Estrutura Urbana Na Area Suburbana de Lisboa». Lisboa: Separata do Boletim Cultural de Assembleia Distrital de Lisboa.

Sapir, Edward 1929. «The Status of Linguistics as a Science». Language 5(4): 207.

Saraiva, Clara 2003. «Rituais Funerários Entre Os Papeis Da Guiné-Bissau (Parte I)». Soronda 6: 179–210.
2008. «Transnational Migrants and Transnational Spirits: An African Religion in Lisbon». Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies 34(2): 253–269.
2013. Blood, Sacrifice and Religious Freedom: Afro-Brasilian Associations in Portugal. *In* Sites and Politics of Religious Diversity in Southern Europe: The Best of All Gods. Leiden-Boston: BRILL.

Sarró, Ramon 2007a. «Cómo los pueblos sin religión aprenden que ya tenían religión: notas desde la costa occidental africana». Quaderns de l'Institut Català d'Antropologia 0(23): 103–122.
2007b. «Órganos vitales y metáforas mortales: un relato sobre hospitales portugueses y diáspora africana». Revista de Antropología Social 16: 325 – 348.
2009. «La Aventura Como Categoría Cultural: Apuntes Simmelianos Sobre La Emigración

Subsahariana». Revista de Ciencias Humanas 43(2): 501–521.
2012. «The Love Boat, or the Elementary Forms of Charismatic Life». Journal of Religion in Africa 42: 453–459.

Sarró, Ramon, and Miguel De Barros forthcoming. «History Mixture and Modernity. Religious Pluralism in Guiné Bissau Today».

Sarró, Ramon, and Ruy Llera Blanes 2008. O Atlântico Cristão: Apontamentos Etnográficos Sobre O Encontro Religioso Em Lisboa. *In* Itinerários: A Investigação 25 Pp. 839–854.
2009. «Prophetic Diasporas Moving Religion Across the Lusophone Atlantic». African Diaspora 2(1): 52–72.
2010. «Profetas e Missionários: Reflexões sobre as Igrejas Angolanas em Lisboa». Estratégias Criativas.

Sassen, Saskia 1996. Losing Control? Sovereignty in an Age of Globalization. Columbia University Press.
2013. The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo. Princeton University Press.

Saunders, George R. 2010. Il linguaggio dello spirito. Il cuore e la mente nel protestantesimo evangelico. Pisa: Pacini Editore.

Sayad, Abdelmalek 2004. The Suffering of the Immigrant. Wiley.

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy 1992. Death Without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil. University of California Press.

Schiller, Nina Glick, Christina Szanton Blanc, and Linda Basch 2005. Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-States. Routledge.

Schiller, Nina Glick, Ayşe Çaglar, and Thaddeus C. Guldbrandsen 2006. «Beyond the Ethnic

Lens: Locality, Globality, and Born-Again Incorporation». American Ethnologist 33(4): 612–633.

Schubert, B. 1999. «Os protestantes na guerra angolana depois da independência : Dynamiques religieuses en lusophonie contemporaine». Lusotopie: 595–596.

Simmel, Georg 2001. Filosofia dell'amore. Roma: Donzelli Editore.

Smith, David Marshall 2000. Moral Geographies: Ethics in a World of Difference. Edinburgh University Press.

Smith, Jonathan Z. 1978. Map Is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions. University of Chicago Press.

Soares, Nuno Pires, and Alexandre Carlos Grilo Domingues 2003. Populaçao. Consolidaçao E Maturidade Demográfica de Uma Área Metropolitana. *In* ATLAS Da Área Metropolitana de Lisboa Pp. 121–145. Lisboa: Area Metropolitana de Lisboa.

Springs, Jason A. 2008. «What Cultural Theorists of Religion Have to Learn from Wittgenstein; Or, How to Read Geertz as a Practice Theorist». Journal of the American Academy of Religion 76(4): 934–969.

Strathern, Marilyn 1988. The Gender of the Gift: Problems with Women and Problems with Society in Melanesia. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Stromberg, Peter G. 1993. Language and Self-Transformation : A Study of the Christian Conversion Narrative. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.

Stump, Roger W. 2008. The Geography of Religion: Faith, Place, and Space. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Sylla, Omar, and Mor Mbaye 1990. «Psychopathologie et Migration: Un Cas de Wootal». Psychopathologie Africaine 23(3): 353–363.

Táíwò, Olúfémi 2010. How Colonialism Preempted Modernity in Africa. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Taliani, Simona, and Francesco Vacchiano 2006. Altri corpi: antropologia ed etnopsicologia della migrazione. Milano: UNICOPLI.

Temudo, Marina 2012. «"The White Men Bought the Forests": Conservation and Contestation in Guinea-Bissau, Western Africa». Conservation and Society 10(4): 354–366.

Ter Haar, Gerrie 1998. Halfway to Paradise: African Christians in Europe. Cardiff: Cardiff Academic Press. 2008. «Enchantment and Identity». Archive Des Sciences Sociales Des Religions 143.

Thomassen, Bjørn 2012. «Anthropology and Its Many Modernities: When Concepts Matter». Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute 18(1): 160–178.

Trajano Filho, Wilson 2008. «O Precário Equilíbrio Entre Improvisação E Regras: Reflexões Sobre a Cultura Política Da Guiné-Bissau». Revista de Antropologia: 233–266.
2010. The Creole Idea of Nation and Its Predicaments: The Case of Guinea-Bissau. *In* The Powerful Presence of the Past: Integration and Conflict along the Upper Guinean Coast Pp. 157–184. Leiden: BRILL.

Tweed, Thomas A. 2009. Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion. Harvard University Press.

Vacchiano, Francesco 2014. «A la recherche d'une citoyenneté globale. L'expérience des mineurs migrants en Europe». Revue Européenne des Migrations Internationales 30(1): 59–81.

Vigh, Henrik 2010. «Youth Mobilisation as Social Navigation. Reflections on the Concept of Dubriagem». Cadernos de Estudos Africanos(18/19): 140–164.

Vilaça, Helena 2006. Da torre de Babel as terras prometidas: pluralismo religioso em Portugal. Ediçoes Afrontamento.
2008. Imigração, Etnicidade e Religião: O Papel das Comunidades Religiosas na Integração dos Imigrantes da Europa de Leste. ACIDI, I.P.

Van Dijk, Rijk 1997. «From Camp to Encompassment: Discourses of Transsubjectivity in the Ghanaian Pentecostal Diaspora». Journal of Religion in Africa 27: 135–159.
2004. «Negotiating Marriage: Questions of Morality and Legitimacy in the Ghanaian Pentecostal Diaspora». Journal of Religion in Africa 34(4): 438–467.

Wallerstein, Immanuel 2011. The Modern World-System I: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century. University of California Press.

Weiss, Brad 2004a. Introduction: Contentious Futures: Past and Present. *In* Producing African Futures: Ritual and Reproduction in a Neoliberal Age. BRILL.
ed. 2004b. Producing African Futures: Ritual and Reproduction in a Neoliberal Age. BRILL.

Werbner, Pnina 1996. «Stamping the Earth with the Name of Allah: Zikr and the Sacralizing of Space among British Muslims». Cultural Anthropology 11(3): 309–338.

Whorf, Benjamin Lee 1956. Language, Thought, and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf. MIT Press.

Wilson, Bryan R., ed. 1970. Rationality. Blackwell.

Winch, Peter 1970. The Idea of a Social Science. *In* Rationality Pp. 1–17.

2008. The Idea of a Social Science and Its Relation to Philosophy. Routledge.

Wittgenstein, Ludwig 2010. Philosophical Investigations. John Wiley & Sons.

Wittgenstein, Ludwig, James Carl Klagge, and Alfred Nordmann 1993. Philosophical Occasions, 1912-1951. Hackett Publishing.

Zempléni, Andras 1968. L'interpretation de la therapie traditionnelle du desordre mental chez les wolof et les lebou du Senegal.

Appendix – Letter of recommendation

Lisboa, 29 de Dezembro de 2012

Amados Irmãos;

Saudamos-vos com a gloriosa e bendita paz do nosso Senhor e Salvador Jesus Cristo.

A nossa congregação vem por este meio, agradecer-vos pelo acolhimento da amada irmã Ambra Formenti, que é membro e do corpo de Cristo. A irmã tem sido muito querida no nosso meio, tendo contribuído com amor e disponibilidade na obra do Senhor, principalmente no que concerne a projetos de índole social.

A irmã é cidadã italiana e nos dois últimos anos tem desenvolvido um trabalho junto à comunidade cristã evangélica em Portugal, estando de viagem para a Guiné-Bissau com o intuito de aprender mais sobre o povo guineense. Ela carece de acompanhamento espiritual para que possa continuar a fortalecer-se no Senhor Jesus Cristo e carece ainda de apoio e orientação na sua integração no vosso meio. Esperamos que ela sirva de bênção para vós tanto quanto tem sido para nós e da mesma forma, os irmãos possam servir de bênção para ela.

Que a graça, a misericórdia e a paz da parte de Deus, nosso Pai, o amor do Senhor Jesus Cristo e a comunhão do Espírito Santo estejam convosco.

Recomendamos-vos a manterem-se firmes e perseverantes no amor pelo Evangelho e na unidade do Espírito Santo, para a honra e glória do nosso Deus e Pai Todo-Poderoso.

O Pastor

_____

Eliseu Gomes